

## Office of Peace, Justice and Integrity of Creation – April 2014 Update



**ACTING on BEHALF of JUSTICE from a CONTEMPLATIVE HEART** Thirty eight Sisters of Charity, one Associate, members of NY area religious congregations and lay colleagues participated in this April 12 workshop held at Convent of Mary the Queen, Yonkers. Sr. Nancy Sylvester, IHM, from Institute of Communal Contemplation and Dialogue invited the seventy-six

participants to make their hearts soft, spacious and welcoming. The workshop was planned by the SCNY Task Forces (Creation's Transformative Energy, Global Poverty, Human Trafficking and Immigration).

Comments from the evaluations reflected the spirit of the group: “renewal of commitment to contemplative practice; the link between justice and contemplation was helpful; want to call legislators using a contemplative heart; continue my dedication to the Immigration Task Force; diversity of participants was helpful; meeting so many in social justice commitment; widen



networking in social justice issues; I am going to be a better listener and slow down; try to come up with “contemplative heart” strategies for doing justice; practice listening; engage in contemplative dialogue; to work for justice I need to speak from a contemplative heart; one action I will choose is to bring contemplation to our various activities, i.e. retirement, leaving groups, moving through to new ways of transformation.”



Sr. Nancy offered information and insights into evolving consciousness. Since we see only what our worldview or stage of consciousness allows us to see, it is important to realize that consciousness changes and evolves developmentally. Using the image of the ever-widening spiral, Nancy illustrated how individuals and

groups operate out of different worldviews and developmental stages. How we view the world is the lens through which we interpret reality. Thus, it is important to understand how consciousness (or the new worldview) is evolving today.

Characteristics identified with this new consciousness are:

- ❖ See connections rather than separation – among people and the whole Earth Community, within structures and systems of economics, politics, education, health care, etc.;
- ❖ Tend to the whole – value individual and community;
- ❖ Become interdependent and remember the common good;
- ❖ See from a both / and view;
- ❖ Reclaim faith tradition in an evolutionary framework.



How do we do this?

- ❖ Be a mystic – engage in contemplation!
- ❖ Develop a contemplative heart – a contemplative way of seeing and speaking!
- ❖ Take a long loving look at reality and be in touch with the Divine presence within us. Become fully present to the moment.

Nancy offered these insights: “Contemplation invites you to go deeper. It makes you aware of the worldview out of which you operate. Dive deep down to find common ground and listen with a contemplative heart – a heart which does not resist or flee from what is painful or distasteful. Embrace the person, idea or situation. Welcome the strange and different. Soften the heart to see everyone and everything as a revelation of God. Foster attitudes of openness and hospitality. Be open to yourself as well as to others, to your prejudices, biases, worldviews, to the moment, to the process. Listen! Slow down. Give yourself reflective thinking time. Dialogue is the discourse that goes with contemplation. It is a conversation with those who think differently, the primary purpose of which is to learn from the other – a crossing over into the world of the other and back again. It is a whole new way of thinking in human history.” Nancy challenged us: 1) to practice contemplative listening and speaking, 2) to continue to explore together “What are the implications of doing the work for justice from a more contemplative heart?”



**OUTDOOR STATIONS at CMSV** Students from CMSV and Sisters of Charity gathered on April 8 at the outdoor Stations of the Cross on the Hill. As we prayed the “Stations of the Cross with All Creation” ([www.ipjc.org](http://www.ipjc.org)), we joined with “gasping air, weeping water, extinction of species, Mother Earth” in Jesus’ passion and death today.

**Corporate Witness Sign-ons in April** The Leadership Team signed on to the ICCR Rava Plaza Investment Statement which highlighted progress since last year’s horrific fire and the challenges that companies still need to address. They agreed that SCNY will co-sponsor a May 5 GreenFaith webinar encouraging debate on fossil fuel divestment by Catholic Colleges and Universities as a response to climate change that is consistent with Catholic teachings. (See also Doug Demeo’s article in April 21, 2014 AMERICA magazine.) PJIC Office signed on to letter requesting President Obama and his administration to move from talk to action on nuclear disarmament.

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