

Cockleburs and Shrapnel: The Hands of Women

That nearly mindless counting of the cockleburs
pulled off one by one from the jacket I had worn
for gathering those wildly yellow blooms beside the lake—
now at dusk my busy work while watching Lehrer's News—
that steady motion back and forth from sleeves to sticky pile
kinetic echoing of women's occupation everywhere.

Who does not remember splinters picked
from legs that skidded down a bristled post,
the cinders lifted from an elbow or a knee,
nettles, stickers, thorns in riddance so methodical?
The rote of women's hands since time began.

Oh! I have seen the images from those distant zones
where a grieving mother pulls out shrapnel from her son
in a new pieta created by our blasphemy.
I have seen the gaunt and haunted stare of women
holding to their breasts the lice-flecked heads of infants
and the scab-encrusted torsos of small boys.

Plucking off, tweaking out the jagged shards,
drawing forth the poison, rooting out the venom
one pellet at a time, every thrust pulsating
with the gentle agony redundant movements make.

Drones that drop their bombs or land mines stumbled on
have multiplied the spikes of death that women everywhere
will pick from skins and scalps and bones of their beloveds.

When the anchor starts an update on Afghanistan
I vacantly continue extraction of the burs
in arc of cadenced grief joined with energy of women
digging out in synchrony the residue of death.

*Cecily Jones, SL
Nerinx, Kentucky*

Occasional Papers
A publication of the Leadership
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Winter 2011

The winter issue of LCWR's *Occasional Papers* complements the new contemplative process in which the conference is engaged: "Behold, I am Doing Something New... Can You Not Perceive It?" This is the process that will assist leaders to anticipate what may be beyond the horizon for religious life and to dream of the ways this life can be most responsive to the changing realities of the world and church.

This issue focuses a contemplative look at the reality of the world – in all its beauty and in all its pain -- by including poetry, artwork, photos, etc. created by women religious that invite us into deeper contemplation of what is happening in the world today. Included are pieces that reflect on the daily lives of people in urban or rural settings, the environment, the questions that confront us, new discoveries, relationships, things of wonder, and much more.

Women religious poets, artists, and photographers were invited and encouraged to submit a work to LCWR. The poetry or artwork expresses for the writer/artist what it is that she is perceiving in the world that she believes may be revelatory of where God may be inviting religious.

Cecily Jones and Marie Ego had their work chosen to be in this issue of *Occasional Papers*.



"I think this is the way God wants us to live - as part of a struggling community"

Photo by Marie L. Ego SL

Religious sisters, brothers celebrate jubilees

Jubilarians are honored at annual World Day for
Consecrated Life liturgy at Holy Trinity

Marnie McAllister,
Record Assistant Editor

The Archdiocese of Louisville celebrated the World Day for Consecrated Life Feb. 6 with a special liturgy at Holy Trinity Church. Forty-five women and men religious celebrating jubilees of 50, 60, 70, 75 and 80 years were recognized during the celebration.

Among those honored were Sisters of Loretto, Sisters of Charity of Nazareth, Little Sisters of the Poor, Sisters of Mercy, Ursuline Sisters of Louisville, Dominican Sisters of Peace and Xaverian Brothers.

Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz, who presided at the 2 p.m. Mass, thanked and congratulated the religious for their years of dedicated service. He based his homily on the day's Gospel reading from the Book of Matthew, where Jesus tells his disciples, "You are the salt of the earth" and "You are the light of the world."

The following list of jubilarians includes those who responded to an invitation to the liturgy from the Archdiocese of Louisville. The invitation was sent to all religious in the archdiocese.

50 years

Kay Carlew, S.L.
Margaret Lillian Davenport, S.C.N.
Claire de l'Eucharistie, L.S.P.
Anne Mary Lochner, O.S.U.
Anndavid Naeger, S.L.
Barbara Nicholas, S.L.
Judith Raley, S.C.N.
Carol Rueff, S.C.N.

60 years

Virginia Blair, S.C.N.
Maria Vincent Brocato, S.C.N.
Eileen Carney, O.S.U.
Mary Jamesetta DeFelice, O.S.U.
Mary Austin Donovan, S.C.N.
Mary Kevin Egan, S.C.N.
Jane Hall, S.C.N.
Nancy Hanna, O.P.
Mary Joyce Kernan, S.C.N.
Beatrice Klebba, S.L.
Martha Leis, R.S.M.
Mary Agnella Leis, R.S.M.
Karen Madden, S.L.
Rosemary Nicholson, S.L.
John Edith O'Meara, S.C.N.
Anna Maria Rhodes, S.C.N.
Mary Jane Rhodes, S.C.N.
Margaret Philip Shaw, O.P.
Marie Smith, S.C.N.
Ann Sullivan, S.L.
Rose Andrew Waller, S.C.N.

70 years

Ann Victoria Cruz, S.C.N.
Virginia Ann Driscoll, S.L.
Geraldine Flattery, O.P.
Julia Clare Fontaine, S.C.N.
M. Dorothy Frankrone, O.S.U.
Antoinette Magistro, S.C.N.
Raphael Patton, L.S.P.
Celeste Reedy, S.C.N.
Brother James Smith, C.F.X.
Theresa Louise Wiseman, S.L.

75 years

Angelus Caron, S.L.
Osmund Roberts, C.F.X.
Cary Catherine Vukmanic, O.S.U.

80 years

Helen Gertrude Fontaine, S.C.N.
Jane Frances Mueller, S.L.
Ida Marie Weakland, S.L.



Peace, justice engaged Sister Rose around world

**"She was very political and
was particularly appalled at the
treatment of women."**

By Virginia Culver

Sister Rose Annette Liddell traveled the world promoting peace, studied world religions, taught religious meditation, worked in poor parishes and marched in civil-rights and anti-nuclear parades.

The energetic Liddell, a member of the Sisters of Loretto for 64 years, died March 31. She was 82. Liddell had moved the day before her death to the Sisters of Loretto Motherhouse in Nerinx, Ky. She was ill and told friends she wanted to be buried at the Motherhouse cemetery.

A memorial service is planned at 7 p.m. April 26 at the Loretto Center, 4000 S. Wadsworth Blvd.

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Reprints by Email

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Do consider *Reprints* by email.

Liddell, a short, slight woman who never lost her Georgia accent, loved dressing up, especially when she read to preschoolers, often playing every role and singing through the stories. She was still showing up every week to read until a few weeks before her death.

"She believed in being engaged in the world," said the Rev. Toni Cook, pastor of St. Paul's United Methodist Church on Capitol Hill.

Liddell attended Sunday Buddhist-Christian dialogue meetings, which often involved people of Muslim, Jewish and Hindu faiths as well.

"She was honest and down to earth, not like some elevated guru-type" when she taught Christian mysticism or other classes at the church, Cook said.

The soft-spoken Liddell was "opinionated, and the

injustices of the world brought out her feistiness," said Sister Cathy Mueller, president of the Sisters of Loretto.

"She was very political and was particularly appalled at the treatment of women," such as sex-trafficking, said Sister Mary Ann Cunningham, a Loretto member.

Liddell loved music and often played the harp for receptions and directed a choir for the Sisters of Loretto, said Sister Mary Ann Coyle, a Loretto member.

Rose Annette Liddell was born in Atlanta on Jan. 14, 1929, and baptized Helen Carey Liddell.

She took her final vows in 1952. She had a bachelor's in music education from Webster University in St. Louis and a master's degree in the same field from DePaul University in Chicago. She taught music at Webster University.

In the 1970s she founded the

Loretto Retreat Center in Nerinx and was part of the order's Third World Project. That took her to Thailand, Hong Kong and Japan. In 1976 she worked for a parish in New Mexico. She met with leaders of other faiths and for a time directed the Thomas Merton Center in Denver.

In the 1980s she worked for the Center for Interfaith Understanding in Jerusalem.

Liddell conducted retreats in such locations as Cottonwood, Idaho, and northern Ghana.

Liddell is survived by two sisters, Ginny Fisher of Cincinnati and Mary Jane Burnette of Knoxville, Tenn., and one brother, Brendan Liddell of Peoria, Ill.

The Denver Post
Denver, CO
April 17, 2011

Discerning Communally a Path into the Future

'Ideas and Solutions Greater than What Any Few of Us Can Project'



Cathy Mueller, SL: "We have already experienced an important outcome in that we are building the base of strengthened relationships even as we get a better sense of the whole."

From our simple beginnings on the Kentucky frontier in 1812 and up to the present, we, as Sisters of Loretto, share in that mysterious yet pragmatic gift

of the Holy Spirit which quietly and decisively brought Loretto into being and keeps it alive today. — I Am The Way, Constitutions of the Sisters of Loretto

Our 199-year history reflects many times when we have been surprised by the Spirit of God, taking us where we never thought of going, challenging us to be true to the Gospel. A recent experience arose in our preparation for our 2009 assembly. Proposals came from the community about the issues of our identity, purpose, and resources. Calls were for a strategic plan to move into the future. Yet there was something that just did not fit in the proposals and there was not much support.

On the last day of the assembly, a proposal came out of the insight, energy, and inspiration of those gathered. It called us to an in-depth discernment process to find our path into the future. The energy in the room was palpable: unanimously we committed ourselves to a very nebulous path and we knew it was the right way

to proceed. "Discernment" is not a word we use in a community context. We had no idea what it would mean.

I believe it captured us because it was more than gathering data and planning a future. It involved our heads and hearts, our spirituality and hopes, our belief in the creative Spirit of God working in us, and the strength of our relationships with one another. A committee was created to formulate and steer this process. It was a challenge to interpret the sense of the resolution and then to make it real. The committee worked with a facilitator and began to use Theory U as a structure and philosophical construct for our work.

Some in the community found it difficult to enter into a process in which we do not have a final product to move toward. Generally community members have been good sports, entering into the activities, not sure of the connections, yet trusting the committee and the unanimous

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consent to the proposal. We met in small groups, including people who did not know one another well in each. We used Skype to connect community members from all parts of the United States and beyond. Sisters and co-members who cannot travel were able to participate.

In September 2010 we gathered at three sites: Denver, St. Louis, and our Motherhouse in Kentucky. Using technology to connect, we explored what is emerging in our world, church, and community; and, even with thousands of miles between us, we knew we were one community. We were reminded again that the Spirit of God is not bound as we renewed our energy and commitment to one another and to this communal discernment process.

Theory U is a basic structure that gives words to what we already know. Some community members have discovered that they use the principles of Theory U without

knowing it. The process has filtered into a lot of the internal work of the community.

There is still some resistance that we are moving too slowly, we should know by now where we are going. Many are challenged by suspending the need to name the outcome before it arrives; this is not our normal way of planning. We have already experienced an important outcome in that we are building the base of strengthened relationships even as we get a better sense of the whole. We are getting better at speaking our own truth along with listening carefully to what others say. Together we will come up with ideas and solutions greater than what any few of us can project. This way of operating will serve us well as we move into the specific challenges of resources, care for our "eldering" population, mission, and future membership in the community.

Our constitutions urge us to

learn from those to whom we are sent. This is the stance of educators, a strong tradition in our community. It reflects our desire to be learners, to be curious, to make connections, to see what we have seen many times with new eyes. It is a stance in contrast with that of knowers, who may not have space for new learning. We have experienced this in so many disciplines. Just think of the changes in belief that the sun revolved around Earth -- to belief in Earth as part of our one galaxy -- to the knowledge that there are millions of galaxies! What changes will come to our little community and to the face of religious life? We do not know. However, we trust in that creative Spirit of God.

Cathy serves as president of the Sisters of Loretto and resides in Littleton, Colorado.

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McClellan: Nun helps build life for Vietnam's lost

In a sense, it was a group of war veterans who gathered last Saturday in Sister Susan Carol McDonald's backyard in Crestwood.

There were about 60 of them. They were in Vietnam together, but they don't remember each other. Or Vietnam, for that matter. Most of them left when they were infants. A few were toddlers. They were part of Operation Babylift.

It was April 1975. The North Vietnamese Army was overrunning South Vietnam. Hue had fallen. Then Da Nang. Saigon would topple soon. Everybody knew it. Orphanages were jammed, and had been for years. Adoptive families were waiting in the U.S. and Europe. But paperwork was lacking. In a city in chaos, how do you get necessary documentation?

You don't.

Besides, these were kids whose identities were largely unknown.

Approximately 3,000 of them were put on planes and flown out of Vietnam as the North Vietnamese Army encircled Saigon. The last plane in the airlift left four days before the city fell.

McDonald was on that plane.

She grew up in a small town in eastern Colorado. She was the oldest of nine kids. Her dad was the longtime county sheriff. Her mom was a homemaker.

When McDonald was 4, she decided she wanted to become a nun and take care of children who didn't have parents.

She went to Loretto Heights College in Denver, a college run by the Sisters of Loretto. She joined the order. She also got a degree in nursing with an emphasis on pediatric nursing. She graduated in 1970.

In the beginning of 1973, she saw a television report about Rosemary Taylor, an Australian who was working with abandoned kids in Vietnam. McDonald wrote her a letter and offered to work for her.

Taylor did not seem thrilled about having the services of the young nun. I don't know where we'd put you, she wrote. We're sleeping on the floor as it is. You'd be too busy to pray all the time. No thanks.

McDonald wrote back. I'm a pediatric nurse.

In May 1973, she joined Taylor in Saigon.

Taylor had three nurseries. She worked mostly with infants because they were most at risk in the country's overcrowded orphanages.

"The infants were fed rice water," McDonald remembers. That's the water that rice is cooked in. It has nutrients, but almost no calories. The mortality rate was high.

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Taylor took infants who had no known histories — no known families, no known neighbors. There were many of these nameless children.

Even before the chaos at the end, it was a refugee society, McDonald said. Babies were left at markets, churches, government offices and sometimes on the side of the road.

McDonald ran one of Taylor's three nurseries. She lived in the place. It was her entire life.

As the end approached, she and Taylor were desperate to get the kids out of the country. They had Vietnamese working for them, but who would pay them after Taylor and McDonald left?

They pleaded with the U.S. embassy for help. On April 4, the embassy provided a C-5A Galaxy cargo transport plane. More than 300 children were loaded on the plane. Moments after takeoff,

the rear door popped open and separated. The plane crashed, and 153 kids died.

After that disaster, benefactors chartered commercial planes. McDonald flew out on the last charter, four days before Saigon fell.

After Vietnam, McDonald worked as a nurse in a number of places, including Bangladesh, Guatemala and Haiti.

For the last 10 years, she has worked with the children she helped bring out of Vietnam. She runs Vietnamese Adoptee Services out of a home in Crestwood. It is not affiliated with the Sisters of Loretto, but the order provides room and board to let her do it.

Often, the children — now young adults, of course — want to know as much as they can about their past. Sadly, there is little to learn. McDonald puts them in touch with other adoptees who came

from the same orphanage. That is something.

Several times she has taken small groups back to Vietnam. Three of the orphanages that used to feed the nurseries are still in existence — and it is emotional for the children to visit them — but most are gone. McDonald can only take the kids to the location where the orphanages used to be. But that, too, is something.

Last Saturday, she hosted a reunion. The adoptees came from all over the country. Most of them were married, and McDonald's backyard was filled with the adoptees, their spouses and their children.

It seemed like a family gathering, which, in a way, is what it was.

St. Louis Post Dispatch
St. Louis, MO
May 29, 2011

Meet WOC Intern, Emily Cohen



By Emily Cohen

A recent graduate from Seattle University (SU), I am enjoying the adventure of a new landscape and the opportunity to share a one-year internship with both WOC and WATER (Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics, and Ritual) sponsored by the Loretto Volunteer Program. I am excited to join these communities and continue in a new way that has been stirring within and around me for quite some time. While at SU, I frequently found myself at the academic and personal confluence of religion and gender. I completed a double major in Theology & Religious Studies and Liberal Studies with a focus in feminist theology, gender studies, and Buddhism. Additionally, I developed and continue to develop a lifestyle in which communal living and social justice are both necessary and perpetual pursuits.

An artist friend of mine whom

I met over the summer was fascinated with my decision to study theology and continue on this path with WOC and WATER. One day as we were eating lunch and getting to know one another, he asked me, "So when did you become a feminist theologian?" After my initial fascination with the fact that he assertively called me a feminist theologian, the answer came clearly and without hesitation: "When it became necessary." There are things in our lives that it seems we can't help but do. For me, this work is one of those things. Art making, writing, being endlessly awed by trees are some other things. I know that I am called to work for justice and peace through the interconnectedness of community, spirituality, activism, and creativity. The various shapes of this calling are diverse and continually deepening.

However, and of course, I discovered new areas of fascination and conviction, and began to work more intensely within and for issues of gender inclusion and equality in the Catholic Church and other communities. There was not one single moment when this became my determination. Rather, it was made up of countless moments, conversations,

and experiences that became tangled up together in such a way that to ignore this work was impossible. I gathered with other women who have become my sisters and allies. We stole away to our sanctuary spaces and compared experiences, shared in prayer, lit candles, and broke bread. I enter this new experience with them at my side and the wisdom of so many women who have, in an irreplaceable way, shaped my spirit.

As I sit in the WOC office, I am recalling one of these moments and my memory is transporting me to a cafe in Seattle four years ago when I sat across from a mentor and friend with a kettle of spicy, herbal tea between us. We spent a gentle afternoon exploring our shared tugs and pulls toward a vocation that seemed not to exist in a tangible way in our community or culture. We knew it was spiritual, we knew it had something to do with healing work, and we knew it was a calling to deep community.

We had a suspicion it was ancient. This relationship opened for me an exploration into the ever-expanding forms of priesthood, community, and dissent. Since that time

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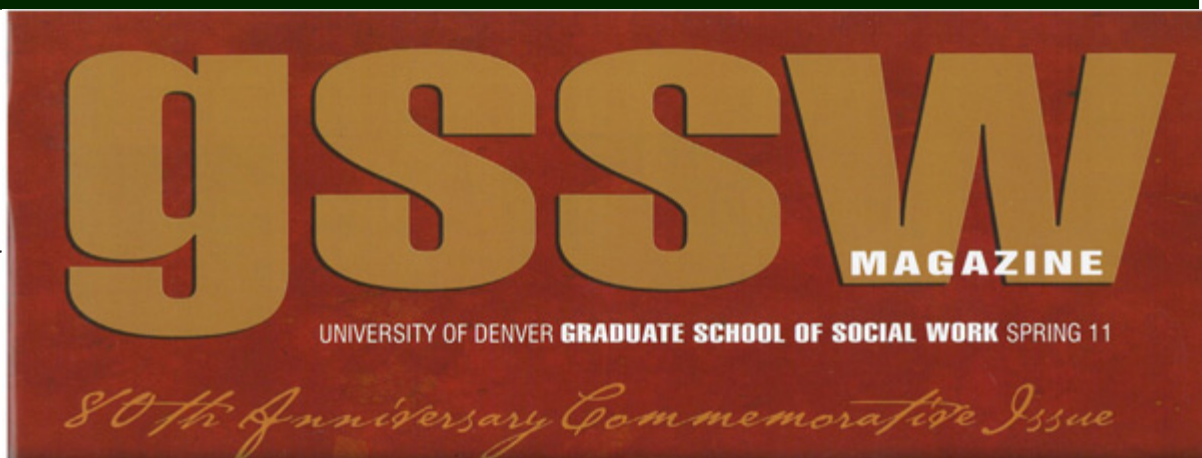
I have been imagining and re-imagining the Divine and actively exploring the ways in which I might boldly walk the line of participation and resistance within the context of community and institution.

As I live-out my year with the Loretto Volunteer Program, I find myself filled with gratitude and openness to the unfolding shape of saying yes to something new,

something unknown, and something good.

*New Women New Church
Women's Ordination Conference
Winter/Spring 2011*

In honor of the 80th anniversary of the Graduate School of Social Work at the University of Denver, 80 graduates were chosen to be profiled. Four of those graduates are members of the Loretto Community.



As a child during the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands, Josepha "Jossy" Eyre (MSW '86) faced starvation, terror and the unspeakable trauma of losing siblings during the bombardment—all veiled in secrecy by adults too afraid to speak openly. The experiences left Eyre with a profound sense of hopelessness, something she recognized among the homeless women she encountered years later as a volunteer at Denver's The Gathering Place. How, Eyre wondered, could she help these women achieve independence and empowerment? The answer came in the unexpected form of beans. The Women's Bean Project, a soup-kit assembly nonprofit that Eyre founded in 1989, then expanded to include other services, helps women develop job skills, good work habits and even inner peace through daily meditative readings. The highly successful project has been replicated in cities nationwide.

students, they were already seeking creative approaches to empowering women and families with low incomes. The Denver nonprofit they founded in 1995, and co-directed for ten years, created an innovative model of service that promotes both personal and social change by combining individual and group counseling with community advocacy and leadership development.

Begun as a small grass-roots effort, Project WISE (A Women's Initiative for Service and Empowerment) now serves more than 300 women each year and is a popular internship site for GSSW students. By helping women develop skills to advocate for themselves and their families, the program also has influenced legislation and public policy related to welfare reform, education opportunities for welfare recipients, and protection and resources for victims of abuse.

In 2000, Project WISE received the El Pomar Foundation's highest, award. The Julie and Spencer Penrose Award recognized the program as the Colorado nonprofit that best served the state's residents by enhancing their quality of life.

Associate Professor Jean East currently serves as GSSW's Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. She was named 2003 Social Worker of the Year by NASW's Colorado Chapter and received the University of Denver's 2006 Distinguished Teaching Award.

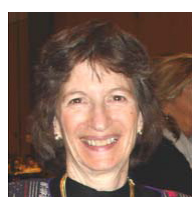
Sue Kenney is an active member of GSSW's Field Team and is

the 2010 recipient of the GSSW Service Award. Both East and Kenney received a 2007 "Be Bold" Award from the Women's Foundation of Colorado.



A member of the Sisters of Loretto, Sister Mary Beth "Buffy" Boesen (MSW '92), MA, has dedicated her life to teaching and social justice. In 1986, she walked across the United States as a participant in Great Peace March for Global Nuclear Disarmament. The following year, she joined 600 American and Russian activists in a march from Leningrad to Moscow supporting the same cause. As Supervisor at Denver's Catholic Charities from 1992 to 2000, Boesen developed a coalition to educate the public about the welfare system and Colorado's legislative policy choices. Named Colorado Social Worker of the Year in 1997, she also received the Children's Health and Welfare Award from the American Academy of Pediatrics. Today, she is President of Loretto Academy in El Paso, Texas.

*gssw MAGAZINE
University of Denver Graduate
School of Social Work
Spring 2011*



When Project WISE co-founders Jean East (MSW '79, PhD '95) and Sue Kenney (MSW '79) were MSW