

Journey

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Turning Over Minds and Hearts

by Sister Kathryn Clauss, IHM

Then he entered the temple and began to drive out those who were selling things there, and he said, "It is written, 'My house shall be a house of prayer,' but you have made it a den of robbers." Every day he was teaching in the temple. The chief priests, the scribes, and the leaders of the people kept looking for a way to kill him, but they did not find anything they could do, for all the people were spellbound by what they heard.

Luke 19:45-48

This issue of *Journey* focuses on a dramatic episode in the life of Jesus that is narrated by each of the four evangelists: Matthew 21:12-14; Mark 11:15-17; Luke 19:45-48; John 2:13-16. Each writer described the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem and into the Temple. There were other times when Jesus had entered this temple, taught, healed, debated and spoke with those gathered. This particular entry was different. Jesus was different.

The Johannine account situates this event very early in Jesus' ministry. The Synoptics portray Jesus as coming close to the time of his death. Luke's account offers the sense that the time had come for Jesus to fulfill his redeeming mission.

Luke portrays Jesus as angry about all the things which distracted rather than helped the pilgrims focus on the presence of God within the Temple and within the community gathered to worship. His Father's house was to be a place of communion with God,

a house of prayer. Jesus understood that by flipping the tables, He might also flip the focus. He hoped that the focus would be on God, as the tradition suggested, rather than on the distractions of money and commerce. He does not speak against commerce only that it is not happening in the appropriate place.

As I imagine this scene, I can hear Jesus saying to the people of his time, "Enough! Do you not understand? Hear in my words; see in my actions. Just as I have overturned these tables, you need to turn over your minds and hearts to God and to the needs of your brothers and sisters. That is the essence of what I have said. I walked with you; I dined with you. I shared in your suffering, in the joy of your healing, and the miracle of your transformation. I have woven your life into the paschal journey of my life. Be attentive! I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

As you reflect on the articles and ideas that follow, you may wish to take some time to revisit the passage from Luke 19:45-48 and consider:



- *Where in your life is Jesus saying, "Enough of the distractions! Be attentive and responsive to God's presence and God's ways within and among you"?*
- *Are you held spellbound and challenged by the person of Jesus and the community of the Trinity? Which of your tables needs to be flipped so that, in the temple of life, you can focus on God; so that you can live intentionally into the paschal journey with radical hope, and joy, and integrity, committed to unconditional love and the common good of all?*

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Congregation of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Scranton, Pennsylvania

Our mission as Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary of Scranton, Pennsylvania, is to follow Jesus as a community of disciples, aware that we are sent to be a clear and understandable prophetic witness to the presence of God in the world. - from the IHM Mission Statement

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A Peace and Justice Perspective

Love Subverting the World¹

by Sister Chris Koellhoffer, IHM

*In the dark times, will there also be singing?
Yes, there will be singing.
About the dark times.²*

I suspect Jesus learned this song about the place of resistance from his mother, who sang of a new world order while he listened deep within her womb. In her revolutionary hymn, the Magnificat, Mary praised the tender mercy of the Holy One who turned a distorted world order on its head. Already now, she sang, the proud have been scattered in the conceit of their heart, the mighty have been cast down from their places of power, the rich have been sent away empty-handed. Already now, the Holy One is restoring right relationship by creating a kin-dom where the lowly are exalted and the hungry find themselves honored guests at a banquet feast where all are welcomed as kin. This resistance is love in action, subverting the values and priorities of a lopsided world order. The revolutionary mark of this love is that it always leans toward the widest inclusion, the most tender mercy, the deepest spaciousness of heart.

The list of those who have enfleshed the Magnificat's message in their lives is long. Permit me to highlight two of the many who have enlisted creativity, imagination, and fresh thinking in overturning the money changers' tables as Jesus did, singing about the dark times with defiant hope and unwavering commitment.

Peter, Paul, and Mary

Beginning in the early 1960s, the folksinger trio of Peter Yarrow, Paul Stookey, and Mary Travers began a nearly five-decade career of using their voices and the universal language of music to support human rights at concerts, marches, and protests. They were grounded in their belief that music could be a catalyst for change, inviting a vision of a world marked by justice and peacemaking. Peter, Paul, and Mary joined Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and thousands of others at the 1963 March on Washington to further the cause of civil rights. They continued their activism as a visible presence in the 1965 Selma-Montgomery march, the

Vietnam War protests, and in decrying the victimization of the people of El Salvador.

In the cover liner for the album *Carry-It-On*, Mrs. Coretta Scott King declared, "Peter, Paul, and Mary are not only three of the greatest artists ever, but also three of the most outstanding champions of social justice and peace."³

Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo

A song quite different from the rallying music of the folksinger trio was the music created by the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, also known as the Mothers of the Disappeared. They were mothers whose adult children or family members were disappeared in the middle of the night by government forces of the dictatorship in Argentina. In an effort to trivialize their protests, the government called them *las locas* (the madwomen). And they said, yes, we are mad. Loss has made us mad, so mad with grief that we don't want any other mother to suffer the anguish of her child's forced disappearance. Beginning in the 1970's, the music they created with their protests was jarring, mournful, fierce, loud. It could not be silenced and it would not go away.

The brutal regime in power intended to keep protest at bay by enforcing a policy that more than two people speaking in public was declared a meeting and therefore, illegal. The regime had not counted on the creativity of the mothers, who began by walking in groups of just two people around the Plaza de Mayo, holding signs with photos of their missing children. They wore white headscarves embroidered with the names and dates of birth of their lost children.

Finding strength in each other by marching in public, they could not be stopped from singing this song of resistance, even at the cost of their own lives. Their international campaign defied the propaganda distributed by the military regime and focused on legislation, the recovery of the remains of their and others' children, and bringing ex-officials to justice.

Surely Dorothy Day, whose life also sang about the dark times, intuitively



recognized the primacy of love in such witnesses when she noted, "Even the most ardent revolutionist, seeking to change the world and overturn the tables of the money changers, is trying to make a world where it is easier for people to love, to stand in that relationship with each other of love."⁴

Yes, it is love that subverts the world. By the grace of the Holy One, may we remain in that revolution of truth, of mercy, of justice that boldly witnesses to God's dream of abundant life for all people, today and every day.

¹ This title was inspired by a line in "The Resistance," a prayer-poem by Steve Garnaas-Holmes in *Unfolding Light*, <https://unfoldinglight.net>, November 16, 2018.

² Bertolt Brecht, quoted in *Against Forgetting: Twentieth Century Poetry of Witness*, edited by Carolyn Forché, New York, W. W. Norton & Company, 1993.

³ King, Coretta Scott. Liner notes. *Carry-It-On*. Rhino, 2003. CD.

⁴ Dorothy Day, *On Pilgrimage*, New York: Catholic Worker Books, 1948, p. 52

Sister Chris is an author and spiritual guide who engages in mobile spirituality ministry, offering retreats and presentations internationally. Visit her blog, Mining the Now, at chriskoellhofferihm.org

Unless a Grain of Wheat...

by Sister Nancy Hawkins, IHM

This past March and April, our IHM Congregation gathered for our Chapter that takes place every four years. Chapters set the tone and offer a direction for future conversations and decisions. Our new direction statement calls us to commit ourselves to various actions, one of which is “embracing courageously the Paschal Mystery.”

The term *Mysterium Pascale* was first used by Christians in the late second century to describe the events of Jesus’ passion, death, resurrection, and glorification. Belief in this mystery informs the heart of Christianity and is a key teaching of Catholicism. It is simultaneously a challenge to our faith, and an incredible gift to those of us who acknowledge its truth and who long to live its message. It builds upon God’s gracious act of creation and God’s self-expression in the incarnation.

All of life contains the rhythm of dying and rising: the experience of the Paschal Mystery. It is obvious in nature when summer yields itself to autumn in the Northeast. We live this experience when we let go of youth and adjust to the needs of an older body. Ideas that once worked seamlessly need to be readjusted to keep up with the times and each week new technology calls us to let go of that which no longer works. The hardest letting go is death. It is here that the life of Jesus of Nazareth has much to teach us.

Every choice Jesus made in his thirty some years of life moved him to Jerusalem the week before his final Passover meal. We see in the Gethsemane passages of scripture a man who is free, who sees everything clearly, and makes the choice to move into that of which human beings are most afraid: death. Did he know and believe that resurrection would take place after his passion and bodily death? We do not know that answer. However, if we view Jesus’ passion and death from the perspective of resurrection, we affirm that God was with Jesus through it all. Elizabeth A. Johnson beautifully sums up the message of the paschal mystery in these words from her book, *Creation, and the Cross*: “Jesus died not into nothingness, but into the arms of his loving God, the Redeemer of Israel, his Abba. Death did not have the last word.”



**The sower in the field
understands how the
Paschal Mystery works.
She pushes the grain of
wheat deep into the darkened
soil. She is patient and
knows how to wait. Then
one evening, a stalk of wheat
emerges from the dark to
shine in the light of day.**

We IHMs are well aware that we will have significant challenges to face as we live into our evolving future. Communal discernment will be needed as we make prayerful choices about issues such as sponsorship, care for the earth, interculturality, and collaborative governance. New questions will be asked, and the future may look hazy or confusing. It is then that we must let the Paschal Mystery be our guide. In the words of Ronald Rolheiser, “The Paschal Mystery is the mystery of how we, after undergoing some kind of death, receive new life and a new spirit.” Easter teaches us that we can move through suffering, pain, and loss to find a new way of living, one we never imagined.

To whom can we look to give us the courage to not only live the Paschal Mystery, but to embrace it? I suggest the women who walked with Jesus as he carried his cross and stayed by him through his passion and death. They accompanied Jesus’ body to the tomb and brought oil to anoint his body the next day. They did not run from the pain they saw. One of them, Mary of Magdala ventured to the tomb expecting to find a body. We hear her struggle with the present moment as she weeps for the one she loved. She believes that all is lost. We, too, may weep when confused and lost, but if we listen carefully, like Mary, we will hear our name. And then we will hear the call to be disciple and announce to our wounded and divided



world that resurrection is real and hope lives on. Mary did not know what would transpire at the tomb. What is required of her is the ability to say “Yes” to a future she does not know. It is the presence of Jesus that makes her yes possible. It is the presence of Jesus’ spirit who will guide us. We need not be afraid.

The truth of the Paschal Mystery turns our world upside down, like the tables Jesus overturned in the Temple. Pain, loss, and suffering need not have the final word. The sower in the field understands how the Paschal Mystery works. She pushes the grain of wheat deep into the darkened soil. She is patient and knows how to wait. Then one evening, a stalk of wheat emerges from the dark to shine in the light of day.

Resources:

Creation and the Cross: The Mercy of God for a Planet in Peril by Elizabeth A. Johnson. Orbis Books, 2018.

The Holy Longing: The Search for a Christian Spirituality by Ronald Rolheiser. Image Books, 1999.

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God's "Temple of Humanity" at the US-Mexico Border

*"Jesus... takes God out of the Temple of brick and mortar
and places God in the Temple of Humanity" - Rev. Peter M. Preble*

by Sister Mary Elaine Anderson, IHM

In the gospel of Jesus flipping the tables in the temple precincts, we encounter the Jewish community who believed that God resided in the temple. For them, sacrifice within the temple was deemed necessary to find favor and be in right relationship with God. In the story, what began as an ordinary day in the temple became, for Jesus, an extraordinary opportunity to confront the money changers whose unjust rate of exchange for temple currency put a heavy burden on those without resources to buy what was needed for sacrifice. On that day, Jesus not only condemned a religious practice that favored the powerful and marginalized the poor, he also challenged the narrow understanding of where God resides, and he exposed the hypocrisy of the religious authorities who prioritized the temple of bricks and mortar and ignored the "Temple of Humanity."

When I think of a temple of bricks and mortar, I imagine people sitting stiffly in cold, hard pews, eyes focused forward with little or no awareness of those beside them. It is an image that is neat and organized and portrays a God who is distant, with whom I need to negotiate to attract attention and gain favor.

The image of a God who resides in the "Temple of Humanity" is very different from what I described above. Humanity is messy, chaotic at times and unpredictable, and God dwells in its midst. A "Temple of Humanity" speaks of the sacredness of the whole and of divine love that is unconditional and freely given to all, not just a few. By flipping the theological thought from God residing in a temple of mortar and brick to a "Temple of Humanity," Jesus is inviting us to be "compassionate, caring flesh" in this world.

Currently, I live with other IHM sisters in McAllen, Texas, just twenty minutes from the US-Mexico border. Our small community is an inter-congre-

gational initiative of the Oblate Sisters of Providence and the Monroe, Immaculata and Scranton IHM Congregations. We have been sent to McAllen to be a welcoming and compassionate presence to our brothers and sisters seeking asylum in the US.

We are not alone at the border. Working side by side with other women and men religious, dedicated laity and non-profit organizations, we serve migrants on both sides of the border. Although we have been here only a few months, we have seen enough suffering to last a lifetime.

Once a week we walk across the Hidalgo International Bridge to Reynosa, Mexico, where thousands of people are forced to live in sub-human conditions while waiting their turn to cross into the US. Many of them have been waiting for months, and some for over a year. They wait because they know that returning to their country of origin, where they endured extortion and death threats and

Asylum seekers depend on the compassionate care of people who believe that God resides in the "Temple of Humanity" and who do not turn a blind eye to their brothers and sisters' angst and suffering.



L-R: IHM Sisters Mary Elaine Anderson, Rose Patrice Kuhn and Elvia Mata Ortega



witnessed the killing of family members, is not an option.

Life in Reynosa can be cruel and frightening at times, especially for those who live on the streets outside the overly crowded shelters. Women and girls on the street have been raped in broad daylight while husbands and boys have been forced to watch. In the muddy and garbage-filled streets of Reynosa, I experienced the true meaning of the word "squalor." Families with small children huddle on the edge of the road under make-shift lean-tos that unsuccessfully shelter them from the rain, the mud, and the extreme heat. Many are sick with no recourse to healthcare; all of them are hungry. Despite all of that, they continue to wait... believing that their only hope for a better life is across the river.

In Reynosa, some migrants do find a safe space where they receive care and compassion. In the Casa del Migrante, the Daughters of Charity provide shelter, food, clothing and basic healthcare for families. But more important than what they do is how they do it and why they do it! The sisters have embraced the messiness and the unpredictability that seems to be part of the migrant's life. They treat each person with dignity because they see God in the midst of suffering humanity.

Those migrants who are fortunate enough to cross the border are welcomed in McAllen by the staff and volunteers at the Humanitarian Respite Center, which

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Reexamining Right to Life in Light of Our Chapter Commitment to Bold Discipleship

by Sisters Kathy Kurdziel, IHM and Susan Hadzima, IHM



*We need to speak, write, and work vigorously
to correct and lift burdens
that cause the right to life to be challenged
in any way.*



The image of Jesus flipping the tables in the temple strikingly resembles the recent action of the Supreme Court in ultimately flipping the decision on Roe vs. Wade. This decision overturned an amendment in place for 49 years and returned to the states the onerous task of resolving the legal questions left hanging by the Supreme Court's decision. The Court's judgment divided the country leaving the more established right to life norms in political, legal and moral shambles. Such chaos should force us into a deeper reexamination of what we believe and for what we are willing to pay the price.

All of the questions of the right to life are being challenged in this 21st century by science, war, climate change, nuclear weapons, and global pandemics. The issues of right to life extend beyond the legalities of Roe vs. Wade. In his 2016 encyclical, *Gaudete et Exsultate*, Pope Francis firmly acknowledged that our defense of the unborn needs to be clear, firm, and passionate for at stake is the dignity of all human life. We, Sisters of IHM affirm our traditional belief and the clarity of Pope Francis' statement about the sacredness of human life. But Pope Francis continues, "equally sacred are the lives of the poor, those already born, the destitute, the abandoned, the underprivileged, the vulnerable infirm, the elderly exposed to covert euthanasia, the victims of human trafficking, new forms of slavery, and every form of rejection."¹ It is a moral imperative for each of us to continue grappling with the mystery and privilege

of human life which is participation in the life of God. The complexities involved in decision making require us to scrutinize carefully our attitudes, judgments, and perceptions, and to examine what informs the beliefs we hold and the choices we make.

The flipping of the tables has revealed new perspectives often encountered for the first time. More and more evident are voices previously silenced by powerful and dominant influences. Flipping the tables has forced us to consider the plight of the migrant, the underserved, marginalized, mentally ill, abused, disabled and abandoned. Shown in this new light, the disparities of our culture and our privileged lives become more evident.

An example might help. Situation: Tina, the mother of a three-year-old child with special needs becomes pregnant with a second child. The father of both children is jailed for a second offense. The mother, struggling to maintain housing after extensive homelessness, faces alone an unplanned, financially difficult, complicated, and anxiety-producing pregnancy. How does she consider the options on the table? How can she choose life in this instance? Suffering herself from mental health issues, she would need to dangerously reduce her medications for the safety of her unborn child. Despite the many obstacles, Tina struggled to complete her pregnancy and gave up the child for adoption. Those choices were very costly, particularly struggling with her mental health needs in order to protect her unborn child, while risking her own

stability and the welfare of her little girl. The residual impact remains. The birth of the child given up immediately for adoption brought on painful emotional issues of abandonment and guilt. Tina remains haunted by the nagging question, "Should I have kept my baby?" To complicate matters, the father, soon to be released from jail, is threatening to fight the adoption and seek custody of the baby. The mother chose life for her unborn child at great sacrifice. The question remains, in choosing life for her unborn child, was she able to assure the fundamental right to life for herself and her little girl? Undeniably, the decisions required in choosing life contain numerous conflicting goods. What can we learn by carefully considering the broader, very complex picture?

Whom do we believe has the right to life? A conscripted eighteen-year-old sent unprepared into active combat? An uninsured mother of three unable to access treatment for advancing cancer? A homeless man wandering the streets in dementia? An undocumented immigrant stranded in the desert fleeing a gang threatening to kill his family? A grandmother sheltering three orphaned grandchildren in a car behind Walmart on cold winter nights? Migrants shipped like cargo to unprepared locations? Victims of racism and hate crimes? Sometimes claiming the right to life comes at a huge cost. Only soul searching, advocacy, political and social action, community

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The Value of Discomfort

by Erin Sadlack

When I first attended Mass at my graduate school's Catholic Student Center, I was startled to hear that the congregation said "God" instead of "He" or "Blessed is she who comes in the name of the Lord" (people alternated the pronouns.) When I thought about the implications, I was delighted. I had never felt so welcomed by my Church, never so aware that my female presence was equally valued. The change of language didn't affect God, but it signaled to me that this was a community who thought deliberately about the power of language and the messages they wanted to send about the equality of God's children.

A new priest, for whom I nonetheless have all the respect and affection in the world, reversed course, explaining that some people told him "they felt uncomfortable" and the Mass should be a place of comfort. He asked us to revert. With regret, I told him I could not. Yes, people might be made temporarily uncomfortable. I was surprised myself. But with that discomfort came reflection—why was this choice made? How did it help me to think about inequity in the Church? How did such language help women feel equally valued? Sometimes discomfort leads to important discoveries.

When I think of Jesus flipping the tables in the temple, I imagine the chaos that ensued, people furious at him for upsetting the status quo. Yet throughout the gospels, Jesus taught things that made people uncomfortable. He ordered his followers not to judge the woman taken in adultery, he praised the Samaritan, he called for his followers to help the poor, the imprisoned, the leper, people on the margins of society. In the Sermon on the Mount, he said to embrace people who are different from you, those you think of as enemies. At the Last Supper, Jesus's final commandment was to "love one another as I have loved you." These teachings represented such a threat to the powers that be that they crucified him rather than embrace the changes for which he called.

How then, are we obliged to act if we want to follow in Christ's footsteps? I argue that each of us is called to flip the tables, even we are uncomfortable by what lurks beneath. One table long



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overdue for flipping is racism. We white people especially have to examine our hearts carefully. If you heard about white privilege and you thought, "that's not true; I have struggled all my life to earn a living wage," I hear you. You have suffered from not having the privilege of class, and I know that your struggles are real. My grandmother cleaned houses for 50 cents; when she applied for food stamps she was denied because her income was too low—they wouldn't believe anyone could survive on it. But that doesn't mean we don't also have the privilege of race. If you heard "Black Lives Matter" and responded, "all lives matter," I beg you to reconsider. No one responded to the "#BostonStrong" hashtag of support after the Boston Marathon bombing with "#NewYorkStrong" or "#AllCitiesMatter"; they understood that Boston was in crisis. In the same way, Black people are facing a crisis of violence that needs special support and attention. To be faithful Catholics following Jesus, we have to listen

to what our Black brothers and sisters are telling us about their lived experiences of aggression and violence, to try to understand how they face evils every day that we never will, simply because of the color of our skin. I know a man who called his administrative assistant while parked outside a store, only to have an employee call the police because she thought he was preparing to rob it. A passing driver shouted "terrorist" at one of my students who was simply walking to a convenience store. These daily aggressions range from people summoning the police on Black people barbecuing in public parks to the murders of George Floyd or Breonna Taylor. A recent study shows that Black neighborhoods are literally hotter than white ones (because fewer parks were built or trees planted or money invested in these communities); that is how pervasive and persistent racism is. Too many of us deny this truth because it makes us uncomfortable. But to follow Christ means embracing discomfort and flipping over the tables.

I also argue that the Church is not exempt from this self-examination, that it could do much more to fulfill its role as a teacher. When the U.S. Council of Bishops condemned the cruel policy of separating mothers and children, how many homilies echoed that call that Sunday or tried to help parishioners see the humanity in these refugees? When Pope Francis issued *Laudato Si*, a call to save the planet, how many church leaders examined the sustainability practices of their parishes and asked their parishioners to join the cause?

It is so easy to slip into habits of thought or action; such is the kind of thinking, a failure to consider what is right, that led to the presence of money-changers in the Temple in the first place. The Catholic Church is a powerful structure; it is therefore all the more important that its leadership be at its most vigilant when examining its conscience, in particular by examining the embedded traditions that preserve and reserve its power to a select group of men. In this case, I would urge the Church to reexamine its rulings about

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DEALING WITH ANGER

by Juana Zegarra

Working as a child therapist has given me the opportunity to learn what the inability or discouragement to express anger can do to our brain and body.

The advantage that children have is the ability and openness to express their emotions freely but they lack the maturity to understand their emotions. They do not carry as much baggage as we adults do!

Some emotions are easier to feel and express than others. Some are more socially acceptable and some are much more comfortable to express. Our emotions need to be expressed, released. Some of us have been taught that emotions such as anger need to be repressed. "Anger is not good," some of us have heard since we were children. Anger is a good emotion like any other. The problem, it seems, is that we have not been taught to express it in healthy ways. I am not talking here about the myth "let it out and you will feel better." Letting it out may provide a subjective sense of relief, yet frequent blowing up harms one's physical health. Plus, it builds and reinforces neurological paths that make it harder to remain calm. Frequent displays of anger can also destroy relationships we have in the workplace, connections with our spouse or partner, our friends, and our children. Here I am in particular talking about repressed anger. Recent research shows that trying to repress, to keep our emotions "down" comes at a great cost. Persistent anger can lead to overload, marked by long periods of upset. The effects of anger include physical and emotional health problems, including a compromised immune system and depression.

We have the tendency to talk about our feelings as either good or bad. We often list joy and happiness under good emotions and anger under bad emotions. According to author Miriam Greenspan, "We have less difficulty with the so-called positive emotions. People don't mind feeling joy and happiness. The dark emotions are much harder. Fear, grief, and despair are uncomfortable and are seen as signs of personal failure."



So how do we express our anger in healthy ways, and most importantly, how do we allow others to express their anger without feeling intimidated or personally attacked?

We need to understand what anger is first. It is an emotional response to an internal or external perceived threat, a violation or an injustice. Many in the clinical field theorize a response of fight or flight helps us protect ourselves from danger.

We know that the experience of anger is learned and varies from person to person. For example, as a child I saw my mother isolate and become quiet when angry. She would give us the silent treatment for days! So, what did I do when I was angry? Exactly the same. Some people may cry when angry, while some may yell, while still someone else may become withdrawn—to name just a few.

Neglecting our anger can be very harmful. Unresolved anger is damaging to our bodies, our interpersonal relationships and our own psychological wellbeing. Unresolved anger can leave us in a never-ending emotional arousal, or make us feel constantly helpless and hopeless.

So how do we manage or express our anger? Think of it as having a tool box. The more tools you have, the better you can choose the most effective tool when you need it. But remember, not all tools work for everybody all of the time. Here are some tools:

- Effective stress reduction and stress management
- Focusing on the areas in which one has control
- Standing up for oneself in a firm, but respectful way
- Setting appropriate limits and boundaries
- Meditation
- Humor
- Yoga
- Journaling
- Physical Exercise
- Noticing what you feel
- Accepting what you feel
- Having "me" days (no, it is not selfish; it is healthy!)
- Realistic expectations of ourselves and others
- Knowing when to let go
- Getting more emotionally literate
- Paying closer attention to what triggers you

Don't forget that all our emotions, the ones that we consider positive and the ones that we see as negative, are part of life. They are inevitable. They are part of our human experience. It serves as a reminder that we all experience the same emotions. It is up to each of us how we express them and how we understand them in each other.

In flipping the tables, Jesus showed us how anger is part of the human experience. Jesus also showed us the importance of forgiveness in the face of hurt.

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Walking on the Two Feet of Love

by Sister Jean Louise Bachetti, IHM



When I was a novice attempting to learn what it meant to be a good sister, it was essential to practice religious decorum by walking slowly, hands in oversized sleeves, and eyes down and reflective. As I look back, it may have been the initial invitation to become a contemplative in action. What I have learned since is that all of us believers are called to holiness; some like myself chose to live what is called religious life, different from the married and single states. The particular vowed life of an IHM sister is lived in community gifted by our charism. Part of our charism reads: "We joyfully participate in the redeeming love of Jesus which impels us to proclaim the good news of God's unconditional love for all." I am questioning now, as the number of our sisters diminishes, how long we will be able to engage with our iconic ministries that put flesh on unconditional love. Prayerfully claiming our vulnerability, our sisters wonder how we might continue in mission as contemplatives in action without these ministries. How will we carry the legacy of those mystics and prophets on whose shoulders we stand? An even more compelling question is, what is the new that is emerging, and what or who should we be now as women religious letting go of ways we can no longer serve? These are questions that loom large.

Recently in her presentation to the Assembly of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious on the "Emerging Future of Religious Life," Anne Munley IHM, shed light on these questions.

"...The structures that have carried religious life forward are not the essence of religious life. We are not our buildings, our institutions, or our ways of organizing ourselves. We are awakening to an awareness that these times offer graced possibilities to deepen our understanding and response to our personal and collective call to be a presence of Love in a world torn by violence and divisions of every kind. The dynamic pulling religious life forward is the desire to live this life with integrity and depth in the context of these times. It is a movement of the Spirit calling us to demonstrate God's love in the world by how we live and what we value."

With her hope-filled words for these times of unknowing, Anne gives energy to the mystery of discerning the future of religious life and its essence wherein one chooses "WHO will be the very center of one's life."

"Loving God means loving the world," concludes contemporary theologian, Elizabeth Johnson CSJ. "It means that work for justice is stimulated by the Spirit of Jesus, for whom the neighbor's good has an incomprehensible value, commensurate with the love of God poured out upon them." It exemplifies what Catherine of Siena, both mystic and prophet, meant when she described the manner in which she would live her life as a 14th century Dominican Sister, namely, by "walking on the two feet of love," by loving both God and neighbor equally and intensely, in the context of prayer and action.

At our last Chapter gathering as a congregation, we agreed on a new Direction Statement for 2022-2026 stating that we are called to be a mystical presence in the world. Mystic herself, Constance Fitzgerald, OCD claims that the "mystic sees a *trace* of God's passing through which one can track down God's image or presence in the world." As an IHM sister, it would mean witnessing to God's unconditional love for all without judgment.

With an awareness and response to tracking down God's image in the world, our congregation's committees of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation and EarthCARE engage us specifically in "The joys and hopes, the griefs and anguish of the people of our time" as well as in the care of our common home. Contemplating daily the Gospel of Jesus, we find our direction to walk on the two feet of love in the way Jesus loved the world and witness how he experienced the pain of the marginalized, the poor and the oppressed. As a mystic, Jesus went off to a lonely place to pray. He was attuned to the beauty of nature talking about the flowers of the field and the birds of the air. How many of us when seeing the majesty of the mountains or a sunset over the ocean are held captive by their beauty? On the other hand, who among us is not shaken to the core by

the horror of human atrocities and the desecration of Mother Earth? Personally, both of these issues in their specific manifestations can bring tears to my eyes. Consciously or unconsciously might these palpable experiences be mystical moments of union with the Divine?

Being human, Jesus also had occasions when the pain and oppression of the people of his time broke his heart. In an angry demonstration of flipping the tables of the money changers in the temple, Jesus provoked the religious leaders of the Temple at a dangerous time. His life was on the line. Matthew Fox believes "prophets call attention to the suffering of the world and say, NO! this is unjust. Mystics say YES to our most positive visions."

It is my conviction that as the future of religious life emerges, we, sisters cannot cease from witnessing to the Reign of God with imagination, fresh thinking and hope, aware that "any attempt to practice the same spirituality as Jesus would entail learning to speak out boldly as he did—and face the consequences." Uncomfortable as that may be, we find assurance manifested in the strength and courage of our foremothers and the staying power of our sisters.

In an interview with, Joni Carley who serves at the UN, Annmarie Sanders, IHM of LCWR, referring to sisters in the US, asked the question, "What could it mean right now that we have this large mass of women available to pray for the world?" Carley's answer, "It means everything. The lives of these sisters should be what we

continued on page 15

What table flipping needs



Any culture that inordinately values things that are shiny and new, and people with fame, fortune, and influence, needs to be flipped. In the uniquely Japanese aesthetic

known as “Wabi Sabi” there is acceptance and appreciation of beauty that is imperfect, incomplete, and impermanent. Noble signs of aging are welcomed as is simplicity, modesty, and silence. As a human race, we must learn to see the beauty in the humble, and to love the broken and the hurt. Through Christ we know that sorrow is not forever. Love is.

-Jo-Ann Baca, IHM Associate



We need to flip the voting tables where people are being denied their voting rights by appointed and elected MAGA officials.

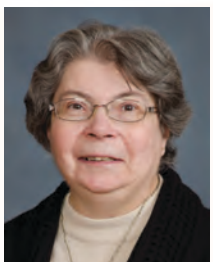
-Sister Margaret Gannon, IHM



I am outraged that sane and insane persons are legally able to obtain automatic weapons. A new one is supposedly coming on the market that is modeled on those used on a battlefield!

That will enable others to mass murder their brother and sister citizens.

-Sister Ancilla Maloney, IHM



The strangers among us-immigrants, migrants, refugees-were not welcomed, not wanted in some areas of the U.S. They were put on planes or busses carrying few possessions, told false

promises, having no idea where they were going. Their destination was some big city in the North. No one there was expecting them. But the strangers were welcomed with open arms, and given food, clothing, shelter; were treated with respect and kindness. The table of mean-spiritedness was flipped to a table of love.

-Sister Ann Marie McDonnell, IHM



The present reality calls for flipping the tables where darkness resides in our world into reservoirs of wisdom and light to transform our world.

- Sister Suzanne Delaney, IHM



I would flip the table on voting rights issues because it spans the problems of racial and social discrimination, disproportionately affecting dark-skinned persons, the elderly,

and all financially poor persons. I am utterly appalled at some states reducing the number of voting polls, moving scarce voting polls to suburban or country locations where there is no transportation, making voter ID very difficult to prove, thereby reducing eligibility, and lastly, doing away with mail-in or early voting.

-Sister Loretta Mulry, IHM



In the past twenty-five years as Assistant Superintendent in the Diocese of Camden, my “flipping tables” moments are usually related to the areas of inequity between public

and private schools around educational funding. Thankfully, while the state of New Jersey offers more funding for private schools than many other states, the nonpublic community is still working tirelessly to advance the adoption of school choice for the state. This has been, to put it mildly, an uphill climb at best. As a viable alternative to the many under-achieving public schools in the city of Camden, our Catholic schools would welcome students whose parents wish for a more conducive educational environment for their children, if only funding were provided in the form of vouchers or tax credits. While we do have our moments of justified anger, and of wanting to “flip tables” to see this become a reality, we continue to urge our constituents to do all that is possible in terms of political advocacy. This is what we must do, as the future success of our children demands that we do no less.

-Sister Rose DiFluri, IHM

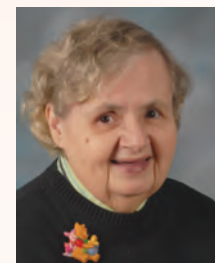
IHM Direction Statement

Journeying together in co-creating our world, we intentionally engage in actions that reflect our faith, creation and the transformation of the world.

Let this be the time we commit to:

- Embracing courageously the Paschal Mystery
- Being a mystical presence in the world
- Living boldly the call to discipleship
- Engaging in the evolving relationship with ourselves and with the global community
- Accepting the consequences of leadership
- Fostering mutuality and accountability
- Planning for the future, through communal discernment, recognizing the present moment...

Let this be the time to cross the threshold



As the election approaches, I would like to flip the table on the phrases: “Right to Life” (only for fetuses and not mothers, victims of rape, sexual violence or women with uterine health issues and the poor) and “Pro-Abortion” (does anyone seriously think a woman, a doctor,

a family are seriously in favor of abortions? Rather, they want the ability to make a personal/family decision about having an abortion - and its potential physical, emotional and financial consequences - instead of a legal decision by a court).

-Sister Patt Walsh, IHM



When I think about flipping tables, there are so many I would like to flip. Many in society: like bringing back the idea of respect as opposed to competition, caring for the earth as opposed to using it for our own benefit, and greed as opposed to working for the common good. In

the Church there are tables as well that need to be flipped. Women in leadership, dignity and respect for LGBTQIA+ brothers and sisters, speaking out on social justice issues like poverty, privilege, voting rights and so many more. We have so much work to do.

-Sister John Michele Southwick, IHM

eds to be done today?

by IHM Sisters and IHM Associates

atement 2022-2026

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I think our terrible problem of homelessness should turn the tables. It is so sad to see so many adults and children living on the streets. My mother used to always thank God for a roof over her head and enough to eat. She added, "what more do I need, Lord?"

Homeless people can't say that, for they don't have either a roof or food. I lived with Sister Jeanetta Hughes and she always made two sandwiches - one for a homeless person whom she saw every day on her way to school and one sandwich for herself. Her little kindness turned over the tables. -Sister Eleanor Marie Malanaphy, IHM



We need to flip the tables on thinking and believing that anyone who is not cisgender and heterosexual is intrinsically evil and morally disordered. This type of binary thinking rejects the great and beautiful diversity in God's creation. -Sister Fran Fasolka, IHM



In 2013, Catholic University of America's campus ministry received a Human Rights Grant to provide students with an opportunity to experience the US-Mexico border first hand. That opened the door for CUA to sponsor its first immersion trip to the Texas/New Mexico border. Life for migrants from Latin America has simply deteriorated over the past nine years. Now is the time and this is the moment when WE as women religious, bishops and Catholics need to begin flipping the tables until we begin to see change at both the state and national levels of government. More and more we are seeing the gradual deterioration of human dignity and basic human rights of anyone seeking a better life for their children and themselves. Our broken and wounded world is crying out for God's unconditional, redeeming love, therefore, we as IHMs must fully embrace the poor and abandoned of our world in the spirit of Saint Alphonsus. Today's immigrants are yearning for the same dream of Theresa Maxis and so we must respond with authentic hospitality and radical availability. - Sister Ruth Harkins, IHM



Lots of tables need flipping to my way of thinking. So, the first one is that of my own heart - being open to listening to both sides of an issue, comparing them to the Gospel, and discerning how best to respond. - Sister Mary Schoberg, IHM

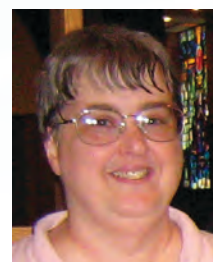


I have always found this scripture passage difficult. Imagining Jesus in this anger-induced state of mind does not come easy for me. Although I have been angry at moments in my own life, my usual reflex reaction is to cry as opposed to imposing any physical response. Having said that, I do believe that Jesus might have been calling us to flip a table to affect an immediate and necessary change for the betterment of the world and all of creation. The most obvious anger-inducing issue for

us today I believe, is racism. It definitely warrants table flipping. The historic and present-day horrific realities of the oppression of people of color must stop. Recognizing and admitting that Jesus was a person of color may be a place to begin conversations for religious women. Being brain-washed by unrealistic depictions of the Holy Family as white has allowed us to participate in and create false interpersonal relationships with Jesus as he truly was. We have vowed to love and to follow the life and ways of a person of color, Jesus the Christ. How might that realization impact our present-day relationships with all of our brothers and sisters whose skin color and cultures differ from ours? In order for us to ponder and perhaps effect any change personally and globally, we may have to flip a table, too. -Sister Judy O'Brien, IHM



Just as Jesus overturned the tables in response to the money changers' disrespect for the sacred space of His Father's house, we might follow His example by overturning the various "isms" that divide and disrespect the sacred soul of each of His Father's creations. -Sister Eileen Coleman, IHM



Defend your church from the devil by praying the prayer to St. Michael the Archangel. He is the fighter for our church. -Margaret Keller, IHM Associate



It's time to turn the tables on entitlement. "To whom much is given much will be expected." Luke 12:48. We have so much and we think we are owed something... privilege, deference, and respect. We can think we are better than others. We need to flip the table on entitlement. -Sister Karen Marie O'Neill, IHM

Being a Mystical Presence in the World

by Sister Ann Barbara DeSiano, IHM

Have you ever found yourself longing to see or hear something uplifting that can break through some of the heaviness that has blanketed us these past two and a half years? It can be a newly bloomed flower, a colorful bird, a walk on your favorite beach, an unexpected call from a friend or a shared meal. We are just craving uplift wherever we may find it.

I have heard some desire a “good news TV station” which will deliver only news which generates happiness. Others blast this idea as an option doomed to fail. They argue that without conflict, there is no drama and no one will watch it. I am still mulling over that opinion, but I believe in the end, the winner is always love.

I watched at the end of a half hour evening news, where accounts of war, shootings, floods, fire and overdoses were all covered in depth, but in the last two minutes, they featured a story about a nine-year-old Oklahoma Little League player who stepped up to bat and before his first swing, was hit in the head as the ball bounced off his helmet.

He eventually got up and went to the dugout. The pitcher who threw the ball stood on the field with his head down, weeping. He did not move for minutes. Then the nine-year-old left the safety of the dugout and walked across the field to put his arms around the pitcher, just hugging him until the tears stopped. I feasted on that story for days, replaying the visuals of a child whose heart was larger than his own pain and suffering. I sensed a mystical heart though I might not have been able to tell you why.

Carl McColman explores the subject of Christian mysticism, and writes that mysticism is all about love. “For some, mysticism may be ‘a head trip’ but for most it’s ‘a heart trip,’ a journey into the sacred nature of love.” Mysticism dares to proclaim that we have all been invited to immerse ourselves in the immediate, experiential life-transforming relationship with the very source of Love in its purest, most original foundational form—Jesus Christ, made real and visible and accessible to everyone.

We can access this great experience of God’s love through faithfulness to simple practices, ever ancient, ever new:



silence, prayer, meditation, contemplation, adoration. Our journey to Divine Union with God is not a lonely one, as it must be supported by immersing ourselves in a community of others who are also trying, as best they can, to figure out what loving Christ is all about. Ahh, community – all the blessings, all the graces, all the striving, all the suffering – all working together to enable each one to come to an understanding of the fullness to which we have been called.

And let us acknowledge there are mystics among us who can bear witness to the profound reality of God’s love and care for us. We have met them and we recognize them. These exchanges are often done quietly, but have a profound effect not just on a single person, but on the community as a whole. Think about the darkest days of the pandemic and ask yourself, “Who brought me light, what form did it take, how long did the effect last, and did those moments carry a sense of holy Presence?” Might you have experienced a mystical moment, an experience that God is fully in this experience and I am filled by God’s presence?

In a workshop sharing thoughts on “Engaging Spirituality in Times of Upheaval,” Tara Brach draws on her Buddhist faith to identify pathways that can increase our spiritual energy:

1. Cultivate loving kindness by seeing the goodness instead of the negativity
2. Put love into action by responding to our bond of interbeing (our oneness)
3. Act to bridge the divide by tending and befriending the wounded other

4. Live from a loving, awakened heart (to which I would add: Say what you love out loud)

I see in each of these suggestions a call to mystical action. It is asking a tender, awakened heart to respond in kind to a suffering heart. And it is asking those of us who suffer to recognize the act of outreach and receive the love being offered. In this way is Christ’s love made real for us and always possible for us to access. We can sense this love being poured out for us and see it spill over to touch many others.

Through her intimacy with God, a contemplative finds wisdom that can be shared with others. She also finds the energy and desire to serve those in need and care for those who suffer. God gives her gifts of love that she can pour out, even as she returns to silence and rest and prayer.

Let us reflect on the inspiration of contemplatives whose lives we have encountered in our reading or study: Caryl Houselander, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Dag Hammarskjöld, Thomas Merton, Karl Rahner, Anthony de Mello, Mother Theresa of Calcutta, Thomas Keating, Richard Rohr, and Cynthia Bourgeault. How did they influence your life or affect change in your spiritual growth? Does that impact still resonate today?

Each of these mystics, in his or her own way has contributed to the spirituality of the Christian community and multiplied those gifts from the depth of personal encounter with God. Many have had a profound impact on our lives in very deep and personal ways. Each of them has succeeded not only in living a mystical life, but in witnessing to each of us that we can undertake this great call to fall in love and live in love with our divine God.

The precise response to this call will differ for each of us, but we serve a God who sees our needs and desires to respond, who feels our suffering and desires to comfort, who witnesses the pain in our world and desires to heal it. We serve a God who is love itself and who gifts us daily with the grace to open our

continued on next page

Mystical Presence, continued from previous page

hearts fully and share whatever new gifts are bestowed with those most in need.

And the heart of our labor to love more and better rests in one thing: Prayer.

What is the one thing that unites us across most denominations of Christianity and religion? While our own quiet thoughts lead to contemplation, what can every believer do, regardless of intellect or other limitation? We can lift our heart and mind to God; we can fold our hands together, bow our head or place a hand over our hearts. We can pray. The steps of Lectio Divina can take us deeper; daily reading of scripture and meditation can feed our souls and imaginations. We do not need to be mystics in order to pray, but we do need to pray if we are to commune with God on a deeper level. One of the most comforting beliefs in my own life journey is believing that even when I cannot pray, someone somewhere is praying for me. Is it Mother Theresa, or Thomas Merton or Anthony de Mello? Or some quiet man or woman sitting in a church somewhere who

is remembering me? I will never know but I believe this with my whole heart.

Keep a set of prayer books that speak to your heart; pray with others if so moved. Incorporate the daily office with others or alone, attend prayer services when possible. Healing prayers for others can be a rich source of inspiration and the rosary never fails. Ask others for ideas and inspiration. Prayer is richest when shared. And simple can be holy too.

To become more mystical is to be willing to be transformed by the very love of God. Fr. Richard Rohr teaches that the two greatest paths to transformation are love and suffering. Both break down our ego defenses and open us completely to mystery, moving us from a fear-based life to a love-based life. Love and suffering are part of every human life. Wouldn't it make sense to make our greatest spiritual teachers, our main portals, opening both mind-space and heart-space to another?

In my story of the little boy hit by the ball, we see his suffering in his tears, but

we also see his heart, his love, when he embraces the sobbing pitcher, offering compassion and forgiveness. God lives in that moment and we can, by praying through our own love and suffering, also be blessed by truly mystical moments that allow us, just for the briefest space, to touch the face of God and share that pure joy with another.

Sister Ann Barbara serves as the Director of Programs at Our Lady of Grace Spiritual Center in Manhasset, NY.

Resources

John McColman, *The Big Book of Christian Mysticism* (Broadleaf Books)

Richard Rohr, *What the Mystic Knows* (Crossroad Publishing)

Richard Rohr, *The Naked Now* (Crossroad Publishing)

Tara Brach, *Guided Meditations*, (tarabrach.com)

God's "Temple of Humanity," continued from page 5

is managed by Catholic Charities in the Diocese of Brownsville. They come with hearts full of gratitude as well as feelings of sadness and anxiety. Many have left mothers, fathers, siblings and children behind and do not know if they will ever see them again. Others like Jessica, whose one-year-old nephew was taken from her in Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), are heart-broken and anxiously wait to be reunited with loved ones.

The initial relief of finally being in the US is short-lived. There is a palpable sense of urgency among migrants when they arrive. They know that they immediately must contact their sponsors, ask them for help to make travel arrangements and arrive on time at their destination to appear for their court hearing. Many migrants come without phones and depend on staff at the respite center to help them find separated family members and contact sponsors. Most are unaware of how vast the US is and that they may have to travel for days by bus or make several connections in airports to reach their destination.

Asylum seekers depend on the compassionate care of people who believe that God resides in the "Temple of Humanity" and who do not turn a blind eye to their



Sister Mary Elaine playing with the children at Casa del Migrante, Reynosa, Mexico

brothers and sisters' angst and suffering. In the world in which we live, it is tempting to be a "temple authority" or a "money changer" and to look out for our own interests, even if it means busing or flying asylum seekers with papers to places far from those who are sponsoring them or making

promises that we have no intention of keeping. When we believe that God resides only in a temple of brick and mortar and not in our brothers and sisters, it is easy to sustain systems that protect the powerful, create fear and distrust of the most vulnerable, and exclude those we think will take what is ours.

What if we became "compassionate, caring flesh"? What if we acted in ways that were welcoming and inclusive? What if we imagined the immigrant as our neighbor who comes not to take what is ours but rather to bring creative ideas to the table and values that will strengthen our community, state and country? Some might call this thinking naïve and idealistic. I believe it is what we need to flip the tables!

Sister Mary Elaine is the Director of Candidates & Novices for the IHM Congregation. She is a member of the OSP-IHM core community in McAllen, Texas, an inter-congregational initiative that accompanies asylum seekers on the US-Mexico border.

Resource:

<https://www.frpeterpreble.com/2021/03/flipping-over-tables.html>

Reexamining Right to Life, continued from p. 6

solidarity, deep prayer and thoughtful dialogues, and the will to justice have the capacity to lead us to compassionate action and graced solutions.

In our new IHM Direction Statement, we challenged ourselves to embrace the bold call to discipleship. As a community we pledged to intentionally fight for the right to life at all stages and for all people! Could we commit more of our financial resources? Use our influence to speak out in corporate stances? Follow up with concrete actions? Model the courage and hospitality of our Sisters of St. Casimir in Lithuania who have opened their home to sixteen families fleeing Ukraine? Insist on healthcare for every person? Ensure adequate sex education? Assure pre- and post-natal care for all pregnant women? Lobby for effective gun control? We need to speak, write, and work vigorously to correct and lift burdens that cause the right to life to be challenged in any way. Sincere, consistent, intentional, long-term commitment IS truly pro-life; this is the way to bold discipleship, protecting the gift of life—together—in harmony and in prayer as bold disciples and faith-filled people of God.

When Jesus flipped the tables in the temple, he wanted to restore his Father's house as a place of life and holiness. Might Jesus be inviting us to create a world where all people can achieve dignity and wholeness and where needless suffering and destruction of any life become unthinkable. Might we participate in table flipping in a valiant effort to restore the right to life and dignity for ALL. Let this be the moment when goodness, conviction, generosity, support, reverence and right relationships turn our world back to the God who gave us the right to life.

Sister Kathy is Delegate for Religious for the Diocese of Scranton and an Editorial Consultant for the Sisters of IHM publications.

Sister Susan ministers as the Program Director at the Catherine McAuley Center in Scranton, PA, which serves women and children experiencing homelessness.

¹ "Vatican responds to Supreme Court overturning Roe," July 22-Aug 4, 2022, NCR Vol. 58 # 21 pp 1, 8.

The Value of Discomfort, continued from page 7

women and the priesthood. That is a table long overdue for flipping.

For those many good men and women who believe that only men should be priests, I ask you to consider listening to the voices of those people who are isolated, alienated from the Church because of this edict, a ruling which ultimately comes from men and not from God. Is this tradition truly serving the entire Catholic body? We see Church attendance dwindling; how much of that is because the Church maintains a structure that says women lack the wisdom and leadership and caring needed to lead parishes, that they are unworthy of consecrating the miracle of the Mass? So many women I know would be brilliant priests, yet they are barred from that calling.

I am neither a theologian nor a Church historian; rather I speak as a layperson troubled by these inequities, inequities I

how banning women from "this special calling" subjugates us to a lower status in the Church, one unable to participate in the governance of the Church, from the parishes across the world to the halls of the Vatican. How can the Church fulfill its mission when it silences half its voices?

Right now, we claim to be a community of love, but the world sees that we are all too content to love some Catholics more than others, to protect some more than others. That kind of thinking—that some people are more important to the Church than others—is what led to the cover-up of the horrific abuse of so many children and facilitated further abuse. The world sees this hypocrisy, and the Church's moral authority plummets. For the Church to proclaim it was wrong on this issue, to open the priesthood fully to women and men alike would be a powerful moment of humility and grace. So many Catholics

I think a faith that invites everyone to commune with divine love is a faith worth fighting for.

don't find in Christ's teaching. When did Jesus say we should elevate one group over another? When did he ever treat women as less beloved, less worthy of respect, less deserving of his attention or of hearing and spreading his message? The Bible shows us he trusted Mary Magdalene to bring the news of his resurrection to the people mourning him (and I could note that she believed in the resurrection without proof, simply knowing her Lord had returned, unlike the doubting Thomas, who needed to touch his Lord's body to believe). But rather than engaging in spiritual one-upmanship debating early Church history, I would rather make a broader appeal grounded in logic and in love and the needs of today's Church. We cannot be one in Christ if we claim that some of us are better able to serve God than others. This insistence that only men are special enough to become priests brings misogyny into the Church, where it hurts all who encounter it, driving wedges between those who should be one family. I have heard some men say the ban on women doesn't mean that men are better than women, but just that we have different roles. Yet I have heard these same men refer to the priesthood as "a special calling." I do not understand how they do not see

would come home. It would be the Church at its best, recognizing we are truly one in Jesus and attempting to mirror that community on earth.

I believe powerfully in the mission of Christ carried out truly by so many Catholics, especially the sisters with whom I work and so many priests and laypeople around the world. I think a faith that invites everyone to commune with divine love is a faith worth fighting for. Like the widow who pestered the corrupt judge, persisting in her hope for justice, I pray continually for us all to open our hearts to eliminate the prejudices that lie within. And I pray that one day my Church will grow in love enough to be the force that Jesus called us to be, to flip over its own tables and reverse its injustices. It's going to be a process that makes people uncomfortable. But here's the inescapable truth—when one group is always comfortable because it excludes others from the feast, that's not the supper Jesus envisioned. Far better to flip that dining table over and start anew in true love and communion.

Erin is a Professor of English at Marywood University. The opinions expressed here are her own.

Walking on the Two Feet, continued from page 9

raise up today, so that we can dispel the cultural mythology that treats prayer as inconsequential... prayerful consciousness could not be more critical."

The *life form* of religious life will not die. As in the past, it will evolve as part of God's dream for the world. We hear this conviction expressed by the group of younger sisters called *Giving Voice*. Both creative and faith-filled, they "yearn to live... in the face of systemic poverty, hunger and war as women religious called to imagine possible futures that will be sustainable and life-giving for all creation."

From growth, to change, to development, religious life imagined by the desert mothers, mendicants and apostolic women will endure through the witness of those in quest of new ways to embody the integrity of the call. Perhaps what is happening now, and not yet known, is a common call to religious life as mystics and prophets transformed by Jesus—Sophia Wisdom, the fashioner of all.

Sister Jean Louise serves as an assistant on the LCWR National Office Staff for the Emerging Future Initiative.

Resources

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What table flipping needs to be done today, continued from pages 10 & 11



-Sister Katie Sitja y Balbastro, IHM



Flip the table to break with the righteousness of thinking that there is only one way to believe or only one set of values applicable to everyone, with no room for openness and diversity.

I'd like to flip the table on inadequate medical care. A few years ago, a man came to our house asking me to pray for his sister who was dying of cancer. Arriving at his home, I became aware of an elderly woman screaming in pain as she experienced her last agony. I asked him if there were medicine to calm her pain. He replied that his family had taken his sister to the hospital the night before and was told there was nothing that could be done for her. Immediately, I got in the car and drove to the emergency room. The nurse informed me that they were at the change of shifts and that no doctor could help me at that time. Then, she retired from the desk and I was left alone. Noticing a wheelchair nearby, I began wheeling myself down the hall, raising my voice saying, "Auxilio, auxilio!" (Help, help!). A doctor appeared almost immediately and asked what he could do. I explained the situation and he wrote a prescription for pain medication. Because I am not proficient in giving injections, I asked for a nurse from our local medical station to help me. We returned to the house and, after a few minutes the poor, suffering woman was able to breathe easily and the family gathered around to pray for her. She died that afternoon. Her brother commented later, "I hope you're around when I'm dying." -Sister Eileen Egan, IHM



What if we could flip the map so that the Global North becomes the South and the Global South becomes the North? Perhaps humanity would realize that if we work together there is enough for all to have enough so everyone might live dignified lives. No one would have so much as to deprive another to go without.

- Sister Donna Korba, IHM



We need to flip tables on all that prevents our crossing the threshold together to something new. -Sister Nancy Elder, IHM



I need to flip my own tables: my assumptions, biases, and outright mistakes. - Sister Christine Mihelich, IHM

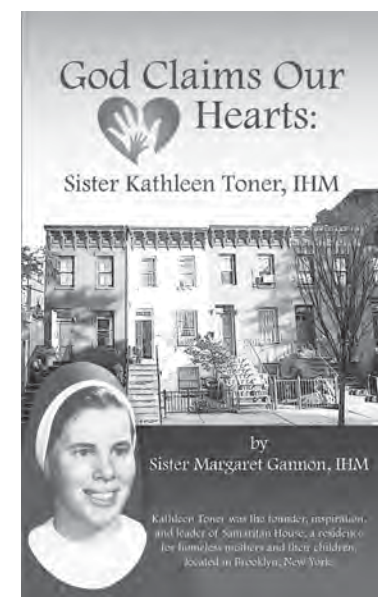


We are called to flip the table of certainty as we strive to embrace God's unfolding plan. - Sister Jane Connolly, IHM



Let us tip the table on those in our society who call themselves Christians, but do not believe what it really means to be a Christian. Christians are followers of Jesus, who is a loving, forgiving and understanding Jesus.

- Pat Sheehan, IHM Associate



God Claims Our Hearts:
Sister Kathleen Toner, IHM
by Sister Margaret Gannon, IHM
Available on Amazon.com

In Memoriam

As women of faith, we find ourselves in communion with all who stand at the crossroads where death is giving way to risen life. As we grieve the loss of our own cherished IHM Sisters, we also celebrate their lives poured out in love and service to our beautiful yet wounded world.

We invite you to join us in honoring the memory of these beloved and holy women.



Ann Newell, IHM
March 30, 1936
May 3, 2022
by Ellen Maroney, IHM

"O God, You have taken me like clay and formed my life. You have given shape to my hopes and dreams. I praise You for having loved me enough to create life through and for me. I ask that You use me to bring new life and joy to all Your people."
Anonymous

I found this prayer and thought it truly reflects Ann's utter trust in and love for the God whom she loved unconditionally. They also offer consolation to us who contemplate anew the mystery of a Divine Love who called Ann home last week with an immediacy that our human hearts struggle to understand but for which our hearts of faith can only yearn. During this morning's sharing at the wake service, some wonderful stories have been shared about Ann's generosity, compassion, determination, humor, and love for her family, her IHM community, and those with and to whom she ministered. She moved us with her persistence and insights, awakened us to causes for justice and peace, especially on behalf of the most vulnerable youth, blessed us with her unshakeable trust in God's love and compassion for all, and reminded us of the inherent value of laughter. These valuable lessons remain in our minds and hearts, not to be forgotten.

Today then we give gratitude for the life of Ann and the countless ways she shared life and love with us as sister, friend, aunt, teacher, campus and pastoral minister, spiritual guide, advocate for homeless youth, and so much more during her sixty-five years of religious life. A person of integrity, Ann lived and spoke her truth even when it may not have been accepted or popular or even in her own comfort zone. Her life journey from a loving family to the Immaculata IHMs and finally to the Scranton IHMs was one of fidelity to one's authentic call from God, to follow wherever it leads one. In the classroom, her students heard her voice of firm but encouraging reasoning mixed with kindness, humor, and an eternal belief in the potential of each. As the education and vocation counselor at Covenant House, she shared her generosity, dedication, and deep reverence for each individual young adult she mentored. Ann considered her experience with these students and the staff with whom she ministered a life-changing experience for her. She had a special gift for gaining the trust of those in need by using daily encounters as opportunities to teach life-long lessons. Her goal was fundamentally to help them become better human beings, and in so doing, to know and draw closer to God who loved them unconditionally.

Ann brought those same gifts to her ministries as a pastoral and campus minister in parishes in New Jersey and at East Stroudsburg University and when she served as a member of the support staff at Lourdesmont and at our IHM sponsored Friends of the Poor. She later ministered as an instructor in our ESL program in Scranton before coming to OLP in 2019 as a prayer minister. That prayer relationship with God was fundamental to all that Ann was and did throughout her life. Most of her ministries were in service to the marginalized, to those most at risk in our society, to those who most needed to know God's love and compassion. She tried her best to embody that love to them.

Ann had a great sense of humor and enjoyed a good joke. Her favorite response

when the staff asked if she wanted ice cream for dessert was, "Is the pope Catholic?" followed by her hearty laugh. She loved a good time, singing, dancing, and she really enjoyed playing Bingo, at which, I'm told, she often cheated and almost always got caught! As the youngest of eight children, Ann enjoyed and frequently talked about her early experiences of living in "community" while growing up. (There must have been something in the water there because five of the eight children joined religious congregations). She unabashedly admitted that she was spoiled, especially by her brothers. That love of family continued through the generations, as evidenced by the presence of family members here with us. We remember today Ann's parents, Ellen and Michael, her sisters, Eleanor and Sisters Marie, Catherine, and Dorothea, all SSJs, and brothers, James, Michael, and Father Joseph, a Jesuit, all of whom certainly welcomed Ann to her eternal home last Tuesday with much joy and festivity.

We ask God to fill with hope and peace the hearts of her sister-in-law, Margaret, and all her nieces, nephews, cousins, and their extended family members, her IHM sisters, especially those who lived with her in Household 1B here at Our Lady of Peace, the staff and administrators here, and all with whom Ann shared life.

"O God, You have taken me like clay and formed my life. You have given shape to my hopes and dreams. I praise You for having loved me enough to create life through and for me. I ask that You use me to bring new life and joy to all Your people."

For sure, Ann embodied the deep meaning of this prayer and so served God and our world. May her example continue to inspire, energize, and guide us always.

I now ask Michael to place the bible on Ann's casket, for she heard the Word of God, she staked her life upon it and received life to the full... the Word now beckons Ann home.



M. Anine Hopkins, IHM
December 7, 1932
May 21, 2022
by Ellen Maroney, IHM

"Dying comes before rising, death arrives before new birth." - Joyce Rupp

How appropriate I think that we gather this morning and celebrate Anine's return home to God on this feast of the Ascension concluding the wonderful season of Easter. God's love overcomes even death and remains in and with us through even these most difficult days following the loss of our sister and also the twenty-one lives lost in the national tragedy in Uvalde, Texas.

Her quiet, joyful, humble spirit revealed her own inner peace and beauty, and came from her deep trust and faith in a God she really loved so totally, so completely. We knew Anine as a kind and generous person who had a deep love for her vocation as an IHM. Her faith was enlivened by her interest in and devotion to the life of the Little Flower, Teresa of Avila, and John of the Cross throughout her life. One of her greatest joys was to share stories in prayer about these saints and how their example and lives impacted so many others.

Anine was a bearer of God's love, kindness and peace from her earliest days. She was a West Side girl from Scranton. Her given name was Ann Marie and her parents raised her and her brother, Joe, to appreciate the values of faith and family, and which included neighbors and the larger community.

She entered the IHM Congregation after high school and became an endearing elementary school teacher. During her sixty-nine years as an IHM, Anine taught in elementary schools in five different states. Her young students from kindergarten to grade three enjoyed being in her classroom because of the enthusiasm and the joy she put into helping them master the important skills, and also, I think, because of the love she showed each

one of them. Her low-key approach and gentle wit captured them, and her patience and encouragement instilled a measure of confidence in those who had little or no confidence in their own ability. She brought them along. She helped them to grow.

After forty years in the classroom, Anine joined the support staff at the Marian Convent, and later here at OLP, visiting the sisters who were ill and companioning them to different appointments. Her compassion and quick smile brightened many a sister's day. She also helped out as a records clerk at the Marian Convent for several years. During this time, Anine became an avid letter writer to our representatives in Congress and the Presidents urging them to take action on various social issues. She considered the work of letter writing an important ministry, and she was very committed to it. For the last twelve years, Anine served as a prayer minister here at Our Lady of Peace.

We were blessed by this special gift of Anine's life with us. She never tried to be someone other than her true self. Her trust in God and her deep gratitude to God defined her life among us. She was ready with a word or an act of kindness or support. Her interest in the Carmelite Saints strengthened and enriched her own rock-solid relationship with God and was the source of her own gentle love and joy throughout her life.

Anine loved to sing and dance. She had a wonderful sense of humor. Her favorite song—was anything by Elvis Presley. She would smile broadly when one of the aides would turn off one of the spiritual CDs, and put on one of Elvis's to enjoy.

We surely will miss Anine, but we rejoice that she's now at home with the God she loved, and is enjoying eternal life with her parents Anna and Patrick, and her brother Joe. They are reunited with her, as she is welcomed into the great joy of eternal life with the God she loved and served so very well.

Our prayers are with her sister-in-law, Maureen, and her nieces, nephews and cousins, and all of their families. We pray for her many friends and her sisters at OLP, especially those who shared life with her in 1C.

One of Sister Anine's favorite quotes of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux is, "Kindness is my only guiding star. In its light I sail a straight route. I have my motto written on my sail, to live in love. For without love, deeds, even the most brilliant count as nothing."

Anine's inner peace and tireless commitment to following in the footsteps of the saints she admired, truly made a difference in the lives of so many of her students and so many whose lives she touched. May her example continue to be our guiding star as we continue our own journeys back home to God.

And so, we now place the scriptures on Sister Anine's casket. For indeed, she heard the word of God, she staked her life upon it, and received life to the full. The Word now beckons Anine home.



M. Daniela McCarthy, IHM
January 27, 1921
May 30, 2022
by Ellen Maroney, IHM

*May you see God's light on the path ahead
when the road you walk is dark.
When times are hard, may hardness
never turn your heart to stone.
May you always remember when the shadows
fall – You do not walk alone."
- Irish Funeral Prayer*

These words from an Irish funeral prayer so aptly describe the one hundred and one years of Daniela's earthly journey. Her entire life was one of seeking and trusting the loving presence of God in the people and experiences she encountered. Today we celebrate her joyful reunion with the One who heard her call, accompanied her through each day's ups and downs, and welcomed her home into a loving embrace last Monday.

Daniela walked among us with spunkiness of spirit and graciousness of heart and touched countless lives and hearts, as we heard during the prayer service this morning. Her energy and enthusiasm, her many kindnesses, her love for her students were all hallmarks of this special woman's life.

continued on next page

Of course, we also know that Daniela had a bit of a stubborn streak, too. I lived with her many years ago in Pittston, and experienced more than once Daniela's arched eyebrow followed by her statement, "I don't want to tell you what to do, but..." when, for example, I rearranged the chairs or tables in the community room, which was my charge, or was preparing a roast for dinner. But always, I remember, she would follow up later with a word or compliment to let me know I was back in her graces. She was a great mentor for me in community – she modeled respect, generosity, kindness, humility, commitment to prayer, and so many other selfless qualities. Daniela also had a wonderful sense of humor and her laugh was infectious. She really enjoyed a good time – any event was an opportunity for a celebration! Above all else, though, Daniela was a woman of dedication to prayer and spirituality. Her prayer time was the core of her day and her life and her love for others was rooted in her close relationship with her God.

Daniela's ministry experiences as a teacher and as a principal in schools in New York, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Idaho, Connecticut, and New Jersey spanned fifty-five years of dedicated service. She thoroughly enjoyed her interaction with her junior high and high school students, especially those at St. John the Evangelist School and Seton Catholic High School in her hometown of Pittston. For Daniela, her lessons went far beyond the classroom walls and her students were a sacred trust. Her quips and eyes that twinkled with delight brightened the day for students, faculty, and staff. Her humor, kindness, encouragement, and affirmation led her students to learn math, for sure, but also some important life lessons and, most importantly, to know God. After leaving the classroom, Daniela came to the IHM Center where she volunteered in the congregation's EEI program and served as a receptionist and as sacristan. Her spirit exuded an energy and kindness that gave us joy and made our days better.

Daniela's deep faith and character were nurtured from birth by her parents and she cherished her family connections throughout her life. As we give thanks today for Daniela, we remember her family members who welcomed her into God's loving embrace last week, especially her parents, Catherine and John, her sister, Anna Marie, and her brothers, James and Joseph. We ask our God of all comfort to support Daniela's nieces, nephews, grandnieces, grand-nephews, Sister Ann Marie O'Brien and all

her cousins and their families.

We give thanks for all those who have shared life and ministry with Daniela, especially the sisters, administrators, and staff with whom she lived here at Our Lady of Peace these past fourteen years, her many IHM friends, and the many teachers, students, and parents who were blessed to know her.

I found a poem entitled, "Irish She Is," which I think is a good fit for Daniela:

Irish She Is

*A strange blend of shyness, pride, and conceit,
and stubborn refusal to bow in defeat.
She's spoiling and ready to argue and fight,
yet the smile of a child fills her soul with
delight. Her eyes are the quickest to well up
with tears, yet her strength is the strongest to
banish your fears. Her disapproval is as fierce
as her devotion is grand, and there's no middle
ground on which she will stand. She's proud
and she's humble, and she's happy and sad...
She's enamored with beauty, wherever it lies.
But mostly she's Irish, in love with her God.*

We are consoled by the sure knowledge that Daniela is once again back in her God's embrace to enjoy the same love she so generously gave to others through her life. Our wishes and prayers for her today are beautifully expressed by these words of the writer and poet, John O'Donohue: "May there be a beautiful welcome for you in the home you are going to, because you're not going to somewhere strange, but you are going back to the home that you never really left." (John O'Donohue, *The Horizon is in the Well*).

I now ask her niece, Mary Catherine, to place the scriptures on Daniela's casket, for she heard the Word of God; indeed, she staked her life upon it, and received life to the full... the Word now beckons Daniela home.



M. Charlene Templeton, IHM
November 22, 1922
July 16, 2022
by Kathryn Clauss, IHM

We gather this morning to celebrate and give thanks for the life of our Sister Charlene. For seventy-six years she listened and responded to the Word of God and served God and God's people through a life of consecration and generous service.

We welcome and are most grateful to have Charlene's niece, Jane Thomas and her husband Richard Thomas, and Charlene's nephew Tom with us this morning, and several of her family members who are joining us online. We welcome you and are so grateful you could be here with us. Additionally, we welcome Father Mark our Passionist brother and celebrant who is with us today. Thank you, Father.

I would like to acknowledge and thank our OLP Administration and Staff for their professional and compassionate care of our Sisters and in particular for their goodness to Sister Charlene.

We sat as a leadership team on Monday morning remembering and sharing our experiences of Sister Charlene. Each one of us recalled one very particular and consistent memory of her. We remembered the warmth of her smile. It was a smile that allowed you to feel welcome and safe in the moment, a moment that became a wonderful place. In thinking about our conversation, I was reminded of Mother Theresa of Calcutta's advice to those with whom she came in contact. She counseled them to "Be the living expression of God's kindness; kindness in your face, kindness in your eyes, kindness in your smile."

Our Sister Charlene had a lifetime of practicing kindness in her smile on intermediate, junior high and high school students in the classroom and library and



Obituaries for IHM Sisters
can be found at:
<https://tinyurl.com/2p99mkyk>

The IHM Communications
Office is seeking old
photographs of IHM Sisters
who are deceased. Send
photos to [communications@
sistersofihm.org](mailto:communications@sistersofihm.org)

continued on next page

as a receptionist at the Marian Convent and the IHM Center. I suspect that each particular age of her students and those to whom she ministered required a different type of smile – the good work smile; the grin that said, “Yes, I see what you are doing: it wasn’t lost on me.” As a receptionist at the Marian Convent and IHM Center, it was the “Come in, you are welcome, how can I help you” smile. Surely, she had a special facial expression for her family and friends, one that reflected her love for them.

Over her lifetime of 99 years, how many moments with the young and the formerly young were transformed by Charlene’s kind and gracious smile as her smile expressed God’s kindness? In her honor today, let’s be intentional about the ways we look at one another; let’s remember in the words of a song from the musical, Annie, “you are never fully dressed, though you may wear your best, you’re never fully dressed without a smile.” Let’s allow our faces to reveal something of God’s unconditional love and care for each person we meet today.

I invite Jane to place Sister Charlene’s bible on her coffin as a reminder that Sister Charlene listened and responded to the Word of God and it is the Word of God who beckons her home.



Ann Marie O'Brien, IHM
July 18, 1929
September 8, 2022
by Grace Surdovel, IHM

In his book of Celtic Wisdom entitled, *Anam Cara*, poet John O'Donohue reminds us, “One of the deepest longings of the human soul is to be seen.”

As we shared during the memorial service, Ann Marie touched numerous lives through her time as daughter, sister, aunt, IHM sister, teacher, administrator, and Dean of Students. Anyone who crossed her path was seen, embraced, and welcomed into the circle of her love. Ann Marie saw you not at face value but saw your full personhood through the eyes of your soul. It was truly a connection of the heart not unlike the image of the claddagh ring she so proudly wore.

A proud daughter of Mary and John Earl O'Brien, Ann Marie cherished every opportunity to spend time with her parents, brothers, and family on the holy sod of Avoca. She would beam with love and pride telling stories of her brothers, nephew James and family. On our many trips up the Northeast extension with Donna Korba and I, Ann Marie would share stories of growing up in Avoca, her time in school with the IHM Sisters at St. Mary's, Marywood Seminary and Marywood College. There would be great laughter and some tender tears.

I had the pleasure of ministering and sharing community with Ann Marie and have many wonderful memories of these blessed days. I can still see Ann Marie gently redirecting the students into their classrooms as they attempted to connect with friends and plan their weekend adventures. She would look my way, give me a wink, and tell the stray student to move it along “dolly boots. In recent days, I have been blessed to hear stories of Ann Marie’s time teaching Spanish at Maria Regina,

serving as Dean of Students at Marywood College as well as serving as Assistant Principal in Delran, New Jersey. Sisters at the IHM Center and Our Lady of Peace have shared stories of their time living with or ministering with Ann Marie and all noted her Irish wit and great patience, even in the most frustrating of circumstances.

Ann Marie was proud of her Irish heritage, and this is certainly reflected in our celebration today which includes a bagpiper. In these final weeks of her time with us, she was blessed to be surrounded by her nephew Jimmy and family, many IHM sisters as well as the caring staff at Our Lady of Peace Residence. We are so blessed to have walked these final steps of her journey home to God with her. It was truly Am Beannaithe (ahm ba-ne-heh), a blessed time.

In her blessing entitled “*In the Leaving*,” poet Jan Richardson reminds us that our final leave taking is but a next step along the journey to our home with God when she writes,

In the leaving,
In the letting go,
Let there be this
To hold onto at last:

The enduring of love,
The persisting of hope,
The remembering of joy,

The offering of gratitude,
The receiving of grace,
The blessing of peace.

We are comforted to know that Sister Ann Marie has been welcomed home by our God and by her parents, brothers, family, IHM sisters and friends. May we be consoled by the memory of our times with Ann Marie and celebrate her life of love and service. In Ann Marie’s beloved Spanish we say, Bien hecho, buena y fiel sierva! Well done, good and faithful servant.

I would now ask Ann Marie’s nephew, James, to place Ann Marie’s bible on her casket. This tradition serves as a reminder to all of us that Ann Marie staked her life on the Word of God and God now calls her home to eternal life.

PATHS OF DARING DEEDS OF HOPE



Letters by and about
Theresa Maxis Duchemin, IHM

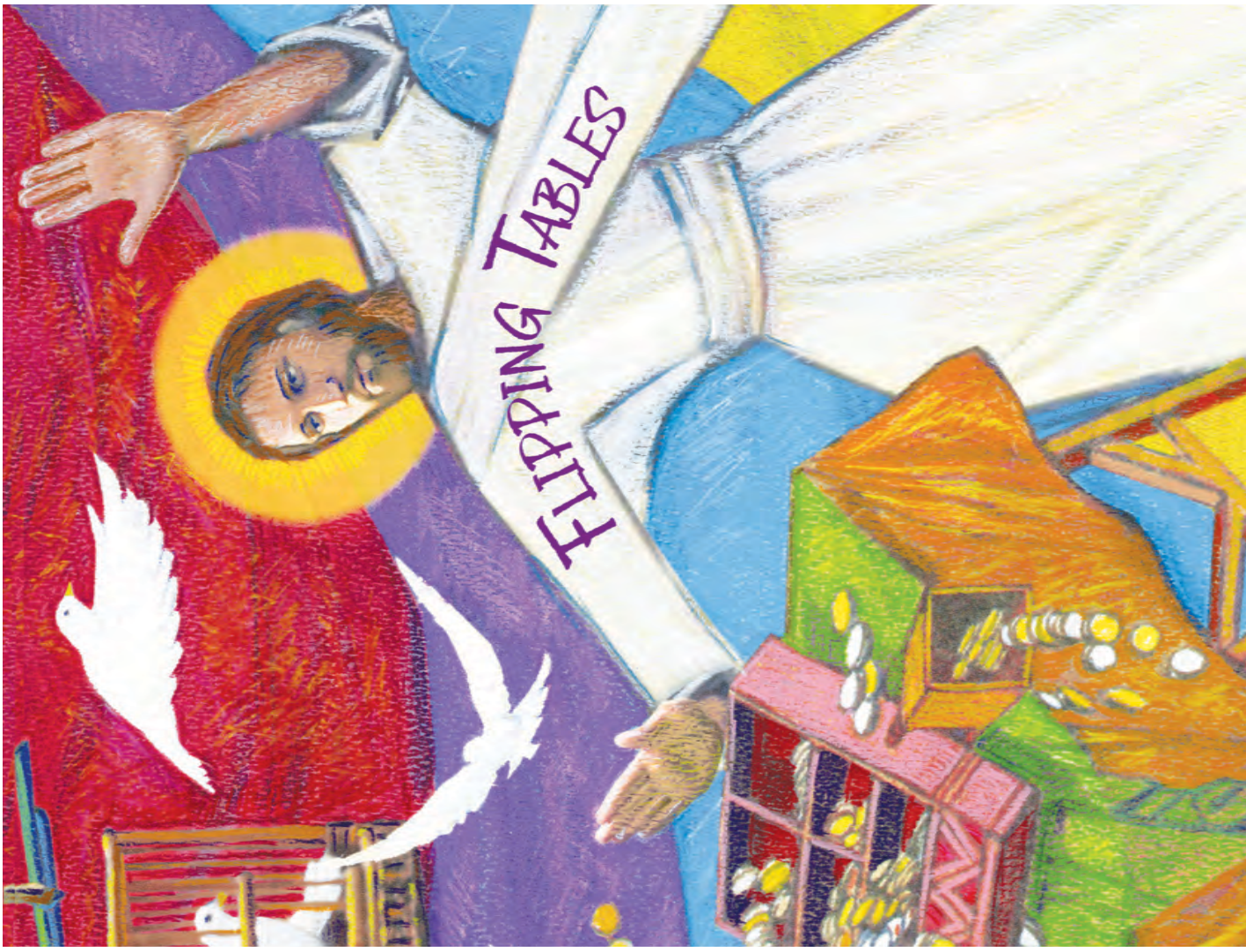
Edited by Margaret Gannon, IHM

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IHM Leadership Team



At the IHM Chapter of Elections, April 21-23, 2022, the sister delegates voted for a new leadership team. For the next four years a president and her council will lead and administer the congregation according to canon law and our IHM constitutions. Our elected leaders inspire, guide and coordinate the congregation as a whole and strengthen its mission in the church and the world. The following sisters were elected for a four-year term (L-R): Sisters Susan Armbruster, Councilor, Grace Surdovel, Councilor, Theresa Jordan, Vice-President, Kathryn Clauss, President, and Judith O'Brien, Councilor.