



Nancy Sylvester, IHM is founder of the Institute for Communal Contemplation and Dialogue, and former president of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious.

## Engaging Impasse Through Contemplation and Dialogue

Nancy Sylvester, IHM

**O**ur world and our Church are outgrowing their old philosophical, theological constructs and worldviews. Assumptions about who we are, what we are about, why we are here, and how the world works are called into question as we deepen our search for identity and meaning at this moment in our history.

We are at a critical time of evolutionary development: recent discoveries about our universe are transforming our vision of the heavens, while quantum physics shows us the interconnection of everything, and that all matter is energy. Many say we are undergoing one of the rare major shifts in consciousness as a human species. We are poised to integrate the wisdom of our pre-modern worldview with that of modernity. This new synthesis brings forward an understanding, and acceptance of, those dimensions of our being and knowing that were diminished with the advance of

scientific materialism since the Enlightenment. It invites us to tap into our soul and spirit to engage the deep questions of our time.<sup>1</sup>

These paradigms, like the air we breathe, are often invisible to

us. We are not always aware of how they affect who we are and are becoming, nor how they shape the institutions and systems that are part of our lives. Many of us, committed to justice work, are coming to realize that the ways we have made change are no longer effective. We feel frustration, anger, desolation, fear, powerlessness: we experience impasse. This impasse becomes the crucible for our transformation.

### Taking the Next Step

I worked for fifteen years in Washington, DC, lobbying Congress. My life was full of creating strategies, advocating positions, participating in demonstrations and presenting workshops on justice concerns. This political climate was full of debate, taking

authority and ministry to the marginalized were hotly contested by Vatican officials. No attempts at dialogue or reflection on experience could influence



their positions. Here too, there was winning and losing, taking sides, not listening to each other, demonizing and victimizing.

I came to understand that my actions in these situations no longer reflected how I wanted to

be. These activities failed to take into consideration the broader context, the worldviews, of the various actors involved. Our actions failed to reflect the understanding that we are all one.

Something different was being called forth.

As I reflect on my experience and shifts in my consciousness, I often ask myself, Why? Why me? Why us? The horizon seems too

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sides, demonizing the other, winning and losing. The next seven years my life, focused on the ecclesial arena, involved sharing the experience of US women religious at a time when

distant; the current injustices seem insurmountable. The hope for a more just and peace-filled future, marked by right relationships, continues to beckon. Everything before me has brought me to this moment: my Catholic roots, passion for social justice, feminism, earth consciousness, as well as the political-social-economic-ecclesial realities of living in the United States.

This moment invites a response. It challenges us to keep going, to take responsibility for the next step. For me, that step involves reclaiming our tradition of mysticism and contemplation, and also facing the impasse of our lives and times. Taking the next step calls us to take a long, loving look at the real. It requires that we respond from the deep well-spring of the Divine presence within us, among us, and throughout creation. Doing this together, with dialogue about our insights, awakens our imagination in new ways.

This new understanding led me to found the Institute for Communal Contemplation and Dialogue, and to initiate its major project, *Engaging Impasse: Circles of Contemplation and Dialogue*.

### Engaging Impasse

Strongly influenced by the writings of the Carmelite Constance FitzGerald, I embraced her insight that facing impasse was like experiencing the dark night of the soul. We are being called to let go, to reawaken our imagination, and to be and do the work of the Gospel in new ways. My intuition that we are called to communal contemplation flowed from my belief that we are

all connected, that we access and create what the biologist Rupert Sheldrake calls a “morphic field of resonance.” Dr. Sheldrake defines this field of resonance as

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the “influence of previous structures of activity on subsequent similar structures of activity.”

The stirrings and insights that emerge from such a practice, deepened by one’s individual commitment to contemplation, lead to new ways of being and doing. We must foster ways of sharing that acknowledge the Divine within each person, and also emphasize openness, curiosity, and synergy of thought. Dialogue becomes our vehicle to deepen our conversations within a communal contemplative context, to move us to respond in new ways individually and together.

And so, *Engaging Impasse: Circles of Contemplation and Dialogue* was born. This process of transformation invites us to tell the story of impasse; to explore our emotions and our complicity; and to imagine new ways of responding. It neither fixes the impasse, nor ignores it, but *engages* it—a word carefully chosen for this experience. The process is intimate, demands great vulnerability, and draws on the deep wellspring of one’s spiritu-

ality. It occurs over a period of time through communal contemplation and dialogue. I designed the process along with Marcia Allen, CSJ, Jean Alvarez, Nancy Conway, CSJ, Mary Jo Klick, and Mary McCann, IHM.

One hundred fifty participants have completed the experience, and 90 more will participate this year. The process is young, and yet many speak of having been changed. This change affects how they are and how they act in their lives, in their communities, and in their ministries and other work. They experience a sense of freedom and new ways of using one’s energy. Others have found a way to live with integrity honoring who they have become, while living in the often-divisive transition time within the Church and world.

This experience has great potential, and is a significant part of a much larger movement. We join with those who speak of the New Universe Story, who understand the need for dialogue, who accept the challenge of facing the devastation wrought by “progress,” and who perceive right relationships and non-violence as key to our species’ future. The Engaging Impasse Circles bring the unique dimension of the wisdom of our faith journey to this new moment in history. ~

*For more information about this process, please see [www.engagingimpasse.org](http://www.engagingimpasse.org) and the book, Crucible for Change: Engaging Impasse through Communal Contemplation and Dialogue (Sor Juana Press, 2004).*

<sup>1</sup> I’d like to acknowledge the work of integral theorist Ken Wilbur in this area. (Please see: [www.integralinstitute.org](http://www.integralinstitute.org))

# Reaching Resolution: A Personal Story

Bishop Nedi Rivera

**I**n 1972, when I began to think that I might be called to the ordained priesthood, I talked to my dad, the Bishop Victor Manuel Rivera. He had always been a feminist, so I was stunned when he said to me, "You know I don't believe in the ordination of women, don't you?" Well, I didn't. If truth be told, I never really believed that—it seemed so out of character.

## A Call to the Priesthood

I had asked my father to help me discern whether this was a Call, or simply a career aspiration. The Episcopal Church didn't yet have systems in place for community discernment, so I was seeking Dad's wisdom on the matter. He did say that if he believed in the ordination of women, he thought I would be as good or



Bishop Nedi Rivera with her father, Bishop Victor Manuel Rivera

better than any of the priests that served in his diocese.

Over the next few years, we would have long conversations about this issue. I would try to change his mind and he would explain to me that it was a matter of essence: and that only a man could stand *in loco Christi*. In 1976 the Episcopal Church was ready

to vote on this once again. There was talk of the Church splitting, those who didn't prevail would leave the church. Many women had already given up on the Episcopal Church and had become Presbyterians or Methodists. Dad and I had a long conversation and came to an agreement: we would continue to love and respect one another and we would both stay in the church.

I was ordained to the priesthood in 1979 and my dad and I developed a wonderful professional relationship. I would ask his advice on congregational development and he would ask mine on Christian Education resources. We would talk about other Church issues and theology, and discuss the doings in our respective dioceses and congregations. I never embarrassed him by asking to preside at the Eucharist in his diocese.

Once, when I was out of work, he complained to me, "If the Church is going to ordain women, they need to help you get a job." I couldn't have agreed more.

I once asked him whether he thought God would let the congregations I served live without valid sacraments. "No," he said, "God takes care of our mistakes." I understood him to mean that God works through us and makes whole what we may have broken. In my life and ministry, I translated that sentiment as: God redeems everything, even our

best intentions.

Mostly, though, we continued to agree to disagree.

## A Change of Heart

In his last years, he came to my congregation for Easter Mass. He would attend the final service of the day. The tradition at our

church was for a retired priest to preside at that Mass, while I would preach, assist and sing. And so, I never presided at the Easter Eucharist my father at-

tended. One year, the service was particularly celebratory: we threw streamers, danced and filled the church with joy. Dad's smile was as big as I'd ever seen it. He liked the way I preached and designed liturgy.

About two years ago, out of the blue, Dad asked me, "Are you in any episcopal searches?" It took a minute for the question to register. Finally, I realized he was asking whether I was being considered for bishop. "No, Dad, I don't think that's where I'm going."

"Well, you should be," he answered. I was too stunned to answer.

A few months later, when I was nominated for bishop, Dad was thrilled. He walked with me each step of the way. I'm not sure which one of us was more excited. After I was elected, I went to see him. He *immediately* took me to his closet, found a cope that had been made for him, and gave it to me. I was overwhelmed. But

*continued on page 9*



Bishop Nedi Rivera is the bishop suffragan of the Episcopal Diocese of Olympia.

***...if he believed in the ordination of women, he thought I would be as good or better than any of the priests...***



Marcia Allen, CSJ, is a staff member of the Manna House of Prayer in Concordia, Kansas.

# Silence as Speech: A Spirituality for Engaging Impasse

Marcia Allen, CSJ

When all of our energies have been expended and yet they bear no fruit; when we find ourselves helpless in the struggle; when nothing we do is effective in changing the situation; when we come to the absolute limit of our personal or communal resources; when our skills and competencies no longer work; when our speech as well as our actions are useless; when we become mute where once we experienced passion and eloquence, we are experiencing *impasse*.

These days, the daily news seems to bring only more to despair of, and we are finding our personal efforts—even our collaborative efforts—ineffective. We feel reduced to powerlessness, sometimes even paralysis. A question begins to haunt us: How can we live with our own ineffectiveness and retain our integrity?

Our culture seems more deeply engaged with consumerism, professional sports, violence, security through nationalism, fundamentalism, and stringent application of a moral code, than it does with the spirit of abundance that underlies every religious tradition.

These times require a private response, a collective response, and also a deeper, qualitative *resocialization*. By that, I mean a new way to regard one another—a new way to *be* together. Our reflexive response might be apathy, vengefulness, absolutism, or cynicism. The resocialization that

is required of us demands an attitude and life stance of abundance, a global and local perspective, and an understanding of the whole—rather than a desire to fix the parts.

To see the whole is the work of contemplation. Contemplation includes what Jesuit William Burghart calls “a long loving look at the real.” It also involves a long loving look *for* the real. Contemplation is deeply personal and is

a must for any person of integrity. In our day, however, contemplation must become communal. A new social order, the redress of the ills of our time and maintaining personal

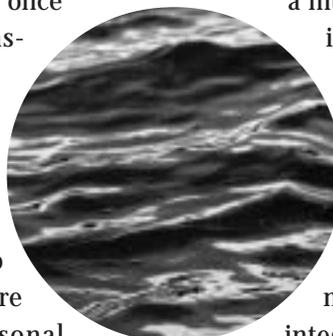
integrity all call us to a deepening social process—that of contemplating communally. Lovingly looking for the real and loving regard of the real together offer liberation to those who commune in this way. This means liberation from habitual perceptions that are mired in righteousness, prejudice, anger, fear and despair.

a certain method, however, that precludes discussion and strategizing—at least for the time being. Instead, they form a circle so that members can face one another. They allow their perplexities to surface by way of a story of personal experience, permitting the story and its pain or consolation to be present among them with reverence, holding it in silence and compassion. This is a simple method for beginning the process of engaging *impasse*.

## Listening to the Silence

Silence and indifference (or nonattachment) are fundamental to communal contemplation. We let the stories told in the circle sink into the silence. We begin to understand that the silence is alive. What we had thought was nothing is actually an abyss of lively possibility. The stories are the articulation of the Mystery among us. As the silence deepens, we become aware of the abundance within us—not just individually, but within the communal order. Among us, the silence nourishes and instructs. We feel a gathering inner strength, at the individual level, and also in the group—what we call the communal person.

Silence, we realize, is not the absence of speech, but a new mode of speaking. In the silence, the inner person (of the individual and of the communal person) expands, deepens and fills. Those who comprise the circle become imbued with a whole new soul-scape, an inner life that is inclusive, global in vision, creative, compassionate,



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How does this transformation come about? Very often a group comes together to “do” something. They might have in mind some kind of reform. They adopt

humble, purposeful and articulate. Real speech and real action are now possible from a life motivated by a true conviction, by

circle and is received in order to be contemplated, until another word emerges. Dialogue is slow, punctuated by silence, character-

ness, we can listen to others and truly hear with our hearts. Free of the egotistical motives that habitually drive our actions, we experience connection. Nothing blocks our relating to one another. This connection comes from the emptiness and vulnerability we have experienced in one another—and in ourselves. Compassion and empathy forge new strength among us and barriers dissolve. Mutuality and inclusivity enliven our creativity, while making a greater spaciousness within us. The one (individual and community) who practices the discipline of indifference soon realizes there is nothing to lose, nothing to protect, and a life of true abundance is possible. A life stance of abundance is the mark of this resocialization, or transformation.

Entering a circle of contemplation and dialogue requires continuous personal effort. It requires a daily practice of contemplation. To do this, one must stay mindful of one's inner movements—the ego's drive to be in control, to be admired, and to be secure. One must practice being content with what *is*. Being aware of our own motives is purifying. These two personal disciplines prepare us for communing with others. They teach us our real emptiness and our true abundance. Abundance comes from contemplative experience: when the eyes of God, the Holy, or the Transcendent open inside us and we see! ~

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***Whatever our faith system, entering into dialogue, communal contemplation, and a new social order requires that we turn loose every bias, prejudice, grudge, and stultifying memory. We must even let go of every desired outcome for our world.***

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connection founded on experience. Now the community moves out of authentic hope, rather than optimism or idealism—which are so easily crushed.

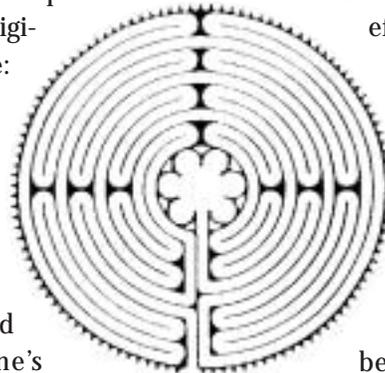
What happens between the telling of our stories and our liberation into a life of hope? Often, many meetings are involved. It takes time to come to such security in the silence. Not all can tell their heart's suffering or vulnerability in the first encounter. Establishing a true feeling of communal solidarity requires patience. The silence is a practice, a discipline required so that all can begin to feel comfortable and safe within the circle.

Also essential is dialogue, based on the premise that no conversation among participants is ever closed. There is always a possibility for something new. Dialogue is like the creative abyss of silence. As someone speaks, rather than offering a defining position, the person opens a door to explore the mystery. Dialogue is a kind of communal, contemplative conversation. The spoken word emerges from the depths of the speaker, unfolds in the receptive

ized by explorations rather than dogmatic opinions. It leads to deeper compassion and inclusion, to wisdom and hospitality.

#### **Practicing the Discipline of Indifference**

The art of indifference is essential to successful dialogue. Although indifference is very often interpreted as apathy, I use it in its original Ignatian sense: *to be completely unattached to everything except the one thing necessary*. This one necessary thing can be named according to one's belief tradition: God, the Transcendent, Truth, Jesus Christ, the Holy, Mystery, etc. Whatever our faith system, entering into dialogue, communal contemplation, and a new social order requires that we turn loose every bias, prejudice, grudge, and stultifying memory. We must even let go of every desired outcome for our world. We come to the circle empty. With this attitude of open-



# Influenced for Life



*We invited two people to share how they engage impasse, enter dialogue and minister differently because of the leadership and witness of Archbishop Hunthausen.*

## Patty Repikoff



Patty Repikoff is the Pastoral Life Director for Christ the King/Cristo Rey Church in Seattle.

Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen's leadership is rooted in the Gospel's hope and unconditional love. From him I learned to be a better leader, a better follower of Jesus, a better human being. His ministry in the face of impasse taught me two lessons that have enabled me to engage impasse in church life, in personal life, and as a world citizen.

First lesson: *Let impasse be our "difficult" teacher.* Archbishop Hunthausen approached the Vatican investigation here with open integrity. He never dehumanized his investigators or his detractors, he believed he could learn from them. His witness taught me to envision impasse as

teacher, albeit a difficult one. Each impasse I encounter—be it a person, a group, a policy, or a situation of injustice—has the capacity to move me beyond my own limited love and compassion to embrace and understand a bit *more* those who resist me, the ones I too easily call "enemy." To face impasse in the Church and society calls forth difficult gifts I would rather not use: endurance, perseverance, courage, and truth-telling, in the face of certain rejection.

Second lesson: *Although an impasse may seem airtight and impenetrable, grace and the Spirit can lead us through locked doors and tombs in surprising ways, when we listen with a pastoral heart.* Archbishop Hunthausen prophetically resisted the Trident submarines carrying nuclear weapons in Puget Sound. However, when he discovered that the sailors aboard needed videotaped Masses, he, with his concerned pastor's heart, offered to preside and preach for a video. On Christmas Day his prophetic message of peace resonated in the depths of the submarine he resisted. The

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navy chaplains reported that the sailors found a rare and abiding comfort and strength from his words. Now, who but the Spirit

could have come up with that strategy?

## David Jaeger



David Jaeger is a Seattle native, and was a priest in assigned ministries for 36 years.

"The bomb," he said, "would have to be my first priority." I had asked Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen what priorities he would share at a

planning meeting with the priests. I was shocked. With turmoil surrounding internal issues, I thought he would have picked vocations, or finances, or shared responsibility between clergy and laypeople. The Archbishop went on to explain, "Building the bombs, targeting them, and our willingness to use them under some conditions, seem to me to be utterly contrary to what Jesus taught us about love and forgiveness."

Everyone at the meeting was amazed. We addressed other pastoral and administrative needs, too. But he persevered then and in years to come, preaching that our willingness to kill others, especially in such massive numbers, was wrong—even soul-killing.

Considerable controversy followed in churches, the wider community, even in the nation and the world. "Look what you got us into," many Catholics said. "What we are already in is what matters more," he would reply. He listened in parishes and public settings to bewildered and

angry people. "Do we sit back and let the Russians overrun us?" they would say. "No," he would reply, "We need to bend our efforts to find *other* ways to achieve peace and disarmament."

"You insult those of us in the military," others would say. And he would respond, "I suspect many of our military people have more desire to avoid war than others since they're committed to our safety and know the horrors of war."

He listened with sensitivity and respect, responding to issues when he could; he continued to

teach. "Thou shall not kill," "Love your neighbor," "Love your enemy," and Jesus' own going to death forgiving everyone, embod-

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***We need to bend our efforts to find other ways to achieve peace and disarmament.***

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ied a call to him as bishop. He preached that we are responsible in conscience to take personal and communal responsibility regarding war, especially one so ultimate as nuclear war.

Some began to see things differently; some respected him,

but never stopped disagreeing; others never forgave him. Some say he lost the battle. I believe he achieved a kind of victory, living up to his role as bishop and applying the Gospel to life in our time.

When I find myself at an impasse regarding what I've stood for or done in my life or ministry, I remember Archbishop Hunthausen's actions. "How would he respond?" I ask myself. Then how will I respond and be? In so doing, I believe I become a better follower of Jesus. ~

## RESOURCES AND PROCESSES FOR DIALOGUE

### Civic Reflection

Join with others involved in common civic work to read, think and talk with each other about life in community and the fundamental human activities that nourish that life: giving, serving, associating and leading. [www.CivicReflection.org](http://www.CivicReflection.org)

### Appreciative Inquiry

Inquiry that leads us to conversations about the good, the better and the possible. <http://connection.cwru.edu/ai/>

### World Café or Café Conversations

Opportunity to foster collaborative dialogue. Enables people to create shared meaning, strengthen community and ignite innovative thinking—[www.TheWorldCafe.com](http://www.TheWorldCafe.com)—[www.ConversationCafe.org](http://www.ConversationCafe.org)

### Open Space

A self-organizing process to promote creativity and leadership. Leadership is shared and responsibility lies with the people who surface topics for an open space discussion—[www.OpenSpaceWorld.org](http://www.OpenSpaceWorld.org)

### Compassionate Listening

A process of "listening our way to wholeness." It is a tool for reconciliation and conflict resolution. Inquiry is based on understanding and empathy, enabling the speaker to deepen his/her experience. [www.CompassionateListening.org](http://www.CompassionateListening.org)

### Wisdom Council

Members are randomly selected to form a Wisdom Council from within a community or organization. The council meets to address key issues of the community and to work to develop unanimous statements. The Council is a choice-creating, democratic process—[www.WiseDemocracy.org](http://www.WiseDemocracy.org)



Marie Dennis directs the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns in Washington DC and is the co-author of *Like Grains of Wheat: A Spirituality of Solidarity* (Orbis Books, 2004).

## If Our Martyrs Led the Church

Marie Dennis

Last year we celebrated the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the assassinations in El Salvador of Archbishop Oscar Romero and four U.S. churchwomen, Jean Donovan, Maura Clarke, Ita Ford and Dorothy Kazel. These martyrs, and tens of thousands of others like them, believed that the Gospel story is presented in living color at the margins of our world. They believed that every person is invited to the Banquet of Life, to a dignified life; and that we are called to denounce injustice and announce signs of the inbreaking reign of God.

What if our martyrs led the Church? What if their values guided it at all levels? If that were the case, the Church would be:

- *prophetic*, and speak truth with courage in the public square,
- *profoundly incarnational*, always accompanying life and struggle,
- *liberating*, for all people, from anything that destroys life,
- *reconciling and inclusive*, inviting everyone to a place at the table,
- *hopeful*, promising new life, and
- marked by the virtue of *solidarity*.

### Martyrdom Comes From Life

If the martyrs led the Church it would speak the Word more prophetically. It would tell the Jesus story, the peoples' story, and the martyrs' story with penetrating clarity and great courage.

"Martyrdom doesn't come from death, but from life," said Sister Noemi Ortiz, a member of the

Pequeña Comunidad ("Little Community") in El Salvador, "The starting point for every martyr has been a committed life, a life ever in service to others...

Martyrs are people who have poured out their lives, the way a candle wears itself out giving light."

The martyrs simply agreed to locate themselves in places where they would encounter the poor, those excluded from society's benefits. They said *yes* to the invitation they heard through their dialogue of the heart with these people. That invitation is extended to everyone: to participate in a dangerous mission on the side of the poor. The martyrs saw the real and did not run away. In fact, the reality they saw in the day-by-day lives of ordinary people riveted them, without exception, to the struggle for justice and peace.

Our martyrs poured out their lives in their pursuit of life. Life, death and resurrection—that's

### The Price of Liberation

"Unless the grain of wheat falls to the earth and dies, it remains alone. But if it dies, it bears much



fruit." (John 12: 23-26) Archbishop Oscar Romero's last words were about the price of liberation, about death and resurrection. It's a familiar story—*our* story, the

***If the martyrs led the Church, it would be an unrelenting force in pursuit of truth and a life-giving channel of reconciliation among and between communities.***

where it begins and ends. Life, death, resurrection, and then new life is the Jesus story, the martyrs' story, and the peoples' story. It is prophetic, profoundly incarnational, and liberating.

Good News—one so important that the Church retells it day after day around the world.

In El Salvador in 1980, to feed the hungry was to be called subversive; to accompany the hungry

as they called for justice, and the oppressed as they called for liberation, was to invite martyrdom. A Church led by the martyrs would be a sacramental Church. It would celebrate Eucharist, retelling Jesus' story and the martyrs' story in the breaking of the bread—knowing that Eucharist in an unjust world is a subversive act, a jubilee event when the hungry are satisfied and the rich sent away, empty. Eucharist in a Church led by the martyrs would be understood more completely not only as food for a weary soul, but as a social sacrament of radical love and justice.

If the martyrs led the Church, it would be an unrelenting force in pursuit of truth and a life-giving channel of reconciliation among and between communities. The martyrs so often were

that: a reconciling force among bitterly divided people. But they also chose sides, living an option for the poor, knowing that lasting reconciliation is inseparable from justice and that forgiveness cannot take root in impunity.

As Archbishop Romero said, "We see with great clarity that here neutrality is impossible... And here what is most fundamental about the faith is given expression in history: Either we believe in a God of life, or we serve the idols of death."

The martyrs lived the virtue of solidarity, not neutrality, and so they would lead the Church to do the same. In the book *Like Grains of Wheat*, Margie Swedish and I describe solidarity as being the practice of two things. It is accompanying people, and the rest of creation, marginalized

by institutionalized violence. It is also engaging in a process of social, economic and environmental transformation that is rooted in right relationships. A Church led by the martyrs would nourish in the community a spirituality of solidarity, encouraging us to:

- move across boundaries to see with new eyes the reality of the world in which we live;
- have our hearts broken by the injustice we see—and broken open by new relationships;
- find life and joy and faithfulness at the margins, even in the midst of great suffering; and
- become people of hope who believe that a better world is possible—and make or renew a commitment to work for that better world. ~

*Bishop Nedi Rivera*  
continued from page 3

that moment was nothing compared to my ordination, when *he* and all the other bishops prayed over me and laid hands on me.

In September we were in the House of Bishops together and someone asked me when my father had changed his mind. I answered that I didn't think he had. I believed that he had changed his *heart*, coming to view me as a priest. By that time, he had finally seen me preside at the Eucharist, and had received communion from me. He had let go of his own inner arguments.

Later, I told him what I had said. He replied that he *had* changed his mind. "Love must prevail over everything," he said. ~

## Lenten Reflection



- After reading "If Our Martyrs Led the Church," reflect and discuss personal and communal practices that would support the values and vision suggested in the article.
- What experience of impasse in my life, family, work, church or community would I like to explore further? Who are the people I could gather for sharing a process of contemplation and deep listening? (page 1)
- What role does contemplation play in your daily life? At what family, community or workplace meeting could you initiate a practice of sharing communal contemplation? (page 4)
- Take time to identify leaders or mentors that have modeled collaborative learning, dialogue and engaging impasse. Take an opportunity to thank them. (pages 3 and 6)



## Young Adult Justice Book Group

The first meeting of "JustUs Reading," IPJC's new justice book group for people in their 20's and 30's was on February 7, 2006. The group will continue to meet at IPJC's offices on the first Tuesday of each month. Participants will read and discuss each book, create community, share ritual and spirituality, and act for justice. The current book being discussed is *Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini. Please contact IPJC 206.223.1138 or ipjc@ipjc.org for information on becoming involved.



## Church Advocacy Days in Olympia

IPJC collaborated in organizing the annual trips to Olympia.

### Issues:

- Childcare
- Homecare workers
- School nutrition program for hungry children
- Basic Health Plan
- Housing
- Children's health care



### Highlights:

- Meetings with 102 Legislators in 34 Districts
- More than 350 participants
- Presentation by Governor Gregoire

### Take Action!

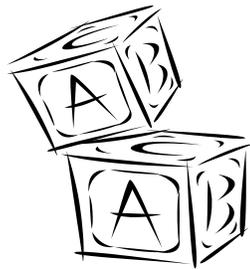
- [www.thewacc.org](http://www.thewacc.org)
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## Parenting for Peace & Justice

A parenting for peace & justice group is now forming in South Seattle. It will be held on Tuesdays from 6 to 8 pm at the Skyway Library meeting room. The dates for the series are 2/28, 3/21, 4/18, 5/16, 6/20. Join us for the entire series to:

- Build community
- Give & receive support as parents committed to peace & justice
- Support a spirituality that does justice
- Share a potluck meal



Topics will include family involvement in social action; nurturing respect for diversity; stewardship/simplicity; nonviolent action and communication; and books & games that teach about peace & justice.

Children are welcome. Space is limited! To register call Lynn Herink at 206.708.4639 or IPJC at 206.223.1138 or ipjc@ipjc.org

## JustFaith: Journey to Justice

In February, IPJC organized and presented two Journey to Justice days for ten JustFaith groups from nine parishes. We worked with the local Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) to build relationships with low-income people empowered through CCHD supported projects.

## Women's Justice Circles—DREAM Act

Join IPJC & our WJCs in advocating for the DREAM Act (Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors). This legislation would allow certain immigrant students who have grown up in the United States to apply for legal status.

DREAM advocates are working to make the 65,000 undocumented immigrant students in the country eligible for in-state college tuition.

- Call or write your U.S. Senators
- Host an Offering of Letters in your church or faith community

# peace & justice center

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## Globalization: Another World is Possible!

### GLOBALIZATION IS A REALITY

- How we got here
- Analysis of the current reality
- How we can shape globalization

*Another world is not only possible, she is on her way.  
On a quiet day,  
I can hear her breathing.  
—Arundhati Roy*



### ANOTHER WORLD IS POSSIBLE: IMAGINE IT!

### Maria Riley, OP

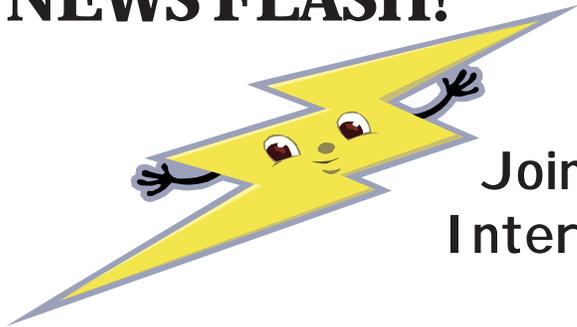
Maria is an Adrian Dominican Sister who has ministered with the Center of Concern for over 25 years. The Center works to advance more just, sustainable and authentically human development for all, especially for the marginalized and those in poverty. Maria coordinates the Global Women's Project and brings women's perspectives to macro-economic issues.

MARCH 21, 2006, 7-9 PM  
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON  
ASSUMPTION PARISH HALL  
6201 33RD AVE NE

MARCH 23, 2006, 7-9 PM  
PORTLAND, OREGON  
ST. PIUS X CHURCH (CEDAR MILL)  
1280 NW SALTZMAN RD

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## NEWS FLASH!



Join us to celebrate and support the  
Intercommunity Peace & Justice Center  
on our 15th Anniversary!

Thursday, April 27, 2006  
Seattle University, Champion Ballroom  
6:00pm

Watch for your invitation in the mail



# Resources

## Engaging Impasse, Contemplation, Dialogue and Creating Change

### Websites

The Culture of Conversation  
[www.cultureofconversation.org](http://www.cultureofconversation.org)

Engaging Impasse: Circles of Contemplation  
[www.engagingimpasse.org](http://www.engagingimpasse.org)

The National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation  
[www.thataway.org](http://www.thataway.org)

Pioneers of Change  
[www.pioneersofchange.net](http://www.pioneersofchange.net)

Shambhala Institute for Authentic Leadership  
[www.shambhalainstitute.org](http://www.shambhalainstitute.org)

*Please see page 7 for more organizations and their website resources on dialogue.*

### Books

Bohm, David. (edited by Lee Nichol), *On Dialogue*. New York: Routledge, 2004.

Bruteau, Beatrice. *The Holy Thursday Revolution*. New York: Orbis, 2005.

Dougherty, Rose Mary. *Group Spiritual Direction: Community for Discernment*. New York: Paulist Press, 1995.

Falk, Richard. *Religion and Humane Global Governance*. New York: Palgrave, 2001.

Frankel, Carl. *Out of the Labyrinth: Who We Are, How We Go Wrong, and What We Can Do About It*. New York: Monkfish Book Publishing, 2004.

Friedman, Thomas L. *The World is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005.

Kornfield, Jack. *The Art of Forgiveness, Lovingkindness, and Peace*. New York: Bantam Books, 2002.

Palmer, Parker J. *A Hidden Wholeness: The Journey Toward an Undivided Life*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004.

Senge, Peter et al. *Presence: Human Purpose and the Field of the Future*. Cambridge, MA: The Society for Organizational Learning, Inc., 2004.

Sylvester, Nancy and Mary Jo Klick, ed. *Crucible for Change: Engaging Impasse Through Communal Contemplation and Dialogue*. Boerne, TX: Sor Juana Press, 2004.

Wheatley, Margaret J. *Finding Our Way : Leadership for an Uncertain Time*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2005.

Wheatley, Margaret J. *Turning to One Another: Simple Conversations to Restore Hope to the Future*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2002.

*A Matter of Spirit* is a publication of the Intercommunity Peace & Justice Center

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Tacoma Dominicans

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