

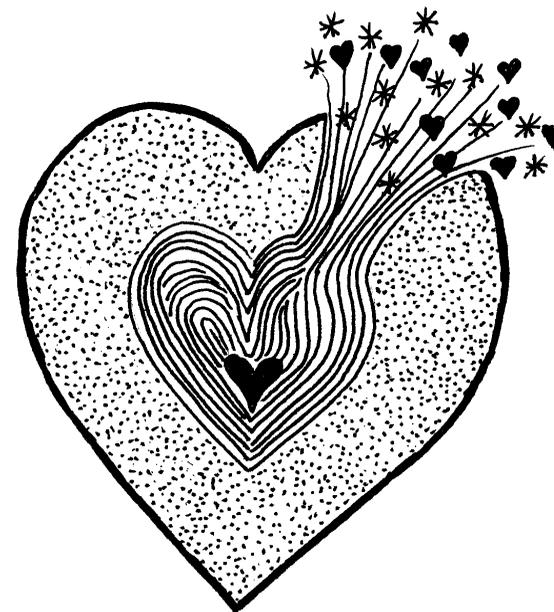


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## STATE OF THE HEART AND ORDER OF THE HOUSE: A Way of Nonviolence



**If you are willing to be transformed, are you  
willing to change?**

With gratitude to

Bette Moslander (CSJ, Concordia)  
Marcia Allen (CSJ, Concordia)  
and Barbara Baer (CSJ, Wichita)

we dedicate this booklet.

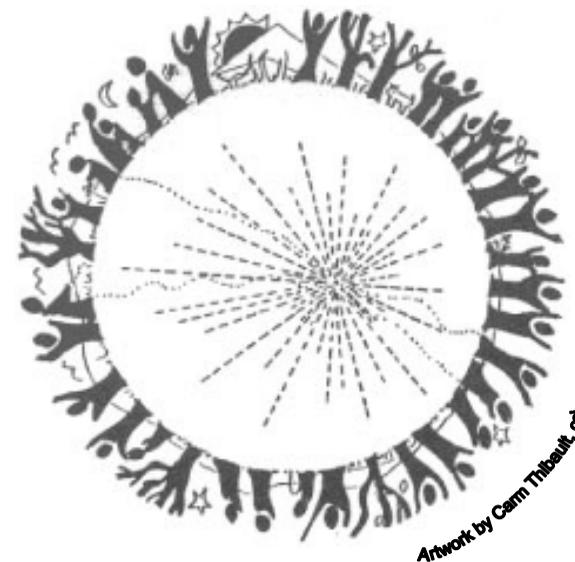
The Bearers of the Tradition Institute  
was born of their passion for the  
history and mission of the Congregation  
of St. Joseph.

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## INTRODUCTION

During the summers of 2003 and 2004, Sisters of St. Joseph from throughout the world gathered at the Bearers of the Tradition Institute in Concordia, Kansas, U.S.A. to study the mission and history of the Congregation of St. Joseph, which Jesuit Fr. Jean Pierre Médaille began in France in 1650. In July, 2005, we were challenged to find ways to bear this tradition in our time and circumstances. We offer the simple, concrete practice of Sharing the State of the Heart and the Order of the House as a way of engaging with others and the world, even as we experience personal and international conflicts which tempt us to disengage. From the outset of this project, we glimpsed that this practice was a way to nonviolence. We offer to you this simple gift, this discipline of Sharing the State of the Heart and Order of the House. May all who take up this practice be seized by God's great love and the desire to globalize love in our world today.



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## APPENDIX 3

### **God's Grandeur**

by Gerard Manley Hopkins

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.  
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;  
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil  
Crushed. Why do men then now not reck his rod?  
Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;  
And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;  
And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil  
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

And for all this, nature is never spent;  
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;  
And though the last lights off the black West went  
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs—  
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent  
World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.



## APPENDIX 2

### Nonviolent Dynamics for Relationships

#### **Pema Chodron, When Things Fall Apart**

...the practice of TONGLEN  
...Softness  
...Welcome  
...Spaciousness

#### **Parker Palmer, To Know as We are Known**

...Boundaries  
...Hospitality  
...Openness

#### **William Isaacs, Dialogue and the Art of Thinking**

...Curiosity  
...Pace  
...Feeling/Feeling  
...Thoughting/Thinking

## AN INVITATION

Are you like Einstein who said that the "surest sign of insanity is to do the same thing over and over and expect different results"?

Are you frustrated by the seemingly endless violent responses to problems we face at home, at school, at work, in our government, in our church and on our planet and are seeking nonviolent ways of reaching solutions?

Do you want to deepen your understanding in today's context, of Jesus' prayer, "That they all may be one"? (John 17:21)

Would you like to develop new patterns of living that are creative, poetic, artistic and holistic, in other words, use other parts of the brain and see new perspectives?

Would you like to be like Gandhi, Martin Luther King or Dorothy Day, a non-violent cultural leader—who is willing to be awakened and to awaken others from the cultural trance in which we find ourselves?

Do you believe we could become better Earth citizens by finding God in all things and allowing God to find us ?

Are you like many searching for meaning for yourself, your family, your school, your work, your government or for your church?

Would you like to be an ordinary mystic of relationships, living the Trinitarian life?

## INVITATION (continued)

Would you be willing to leave your ego beliefs and connect yourself again to the faces of God?

Would you be willing to pray the following from the Eucharistic Letter:  
"May the Divine Goodness make us understand the nobility of the end and purpose of our congregation and help us be apt instruments in making it succeed"? (23)

Are you one of the one million persons who have little or no idea of what the movie, "What the Bleep do We Know" means and would like to?

If you are willing to be transformed, are you willing to change?

**If you can answer yes, not necessarily how, to one or more of the questions above, we would invite you to initiate, deepen, broaden the three century-old practice of the State of the Heart and Order of the House.**

Peter Block in his book, The Answer to How is Yes, says,  
*"When no answer satisfies, and people continue to act as if they do not understand, then the wrong question is being asked."* (p. 43)

Block suggests we move from **How** questions to **Yes** questions, for example:  
Instead of *"How do you get those people to change?"*  
ask *"What is my contribution to the problem I am concerned with?"*  
and instead of *"How long will it take?"*  
ask *"What commitment am I willing to make?"*

Block asks: *"What is the question that, if you had the answer, would set you free?"*

Echoing Medialle, he writes:  
*"Freedom is not doing your own thing, but just the opposite. It means we are the authors of our own experience. It means we are accountable for the well-being of all that is around us. It means we believe that we are constituting, or creating, the world in which we live."* (p. 46)

*"Our desires are given life by their demand for touch, vulnerability, disclosure, surprise, and raw feeling....It is the wonder and connection to the earth, to humanity at large, and to something more important than anything that can easily be talked about."* (p. 73)

### Maxim 73

Live out your life with one desire only: to be always what God wants you to be, in nature, grace, and glory, for time and for eternity.

### Maxim 93

For the three faculties of your soul desire this perfection:  
for the memory to forget things and self in order to remember little else but God;  
for the intellect, to see God in all things: God's glory, God's will, God's contentment solely;  
for the will, the one freedom to go to God, to love God, to embrace all the dictates of God's Providence with all the love of your heart.

## APPENDIX 1

### CONTEMPORARY ECHOES OF MÉDAILLE'S CHALLENGES

Dr. **Wayne Dyer** in his book on tape, The Power of Intention, offers two key insights:

A. The need to reconnect ourselves with God or the power of intention, by letting go of the six ego beliefs: (*Medaille's putting off the old self: Maxim 93*)

1. *I am what I have....my possessions define me*
2. *I am what I do... my achievements define me*
3. *I am what others think of me...my reputation defines me*
4. *I am separate from everyone...I am alone*
5. *I am separate from all I am missing in my life...life is disconnected from desires*
6. *I am separate from God...and depend on God's assessment of my worthiness.*

B. The need to connect once again to the faces of God, who is pure love, pure energy, and pure intention. (*Medaille's seeking God in all things: Maxim 73*)

1. *Creativity*
2. *Kindness (kindly power---raises the serotonin levels in the giver, receiver and the observer)*
3. *Love*
4. *Beauty (find beauty in the present)*
5. *Expansive (absolute need and desire to share and seek more expressions of God)*
6. *Unlimited (endlessly) abundant---not just huge but never stops.*
7. *Receptivity (open to all without distinction, willing to recognize and be recognized, to give back what I have received)*

**Thomas Berry and Brian Swimme** speak of changing our image of our world from being a collection of objects to a communion of subjects. This too finds its echo in our early documents.

## OUR HISTORY

Over 350 years ago, Fr. Jean Pierre Médaille and six French women began a new way of living Christianity. They lived in tumultuous times, in towns and a world decimated by the plague, war and violence, by poverty, chaos and meaninglessness. The Congregation of St. Joseph began with a handful of people who desired to live the spiritual life actively and deeply.

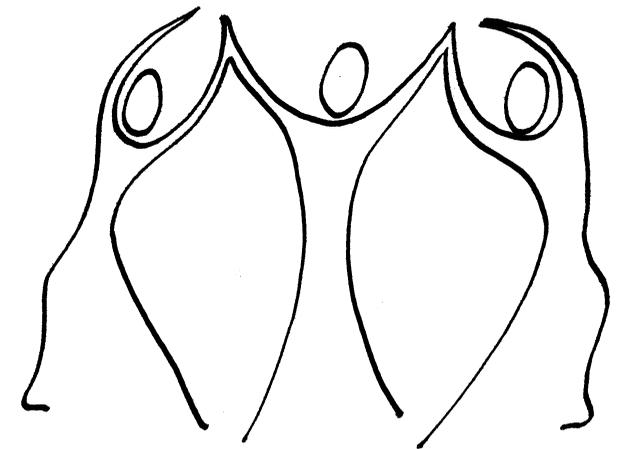
In humble, practical ways, those who were part of the Congregation of St. Joseph attempted to respond with love to each person as a "dear neighbor." They were to be known as the Congregation of God's great love.

*...the purpose of our selfless congregation: it tends to achieve this total double union*

- *of ourselves and the dear neighbor with God,*
- *and of ourselves and all others, whoever they may be,*
- *of all others among themselves and with us, but totally in Jesus and in God His Father. (Eucharistic Letter, 22)*

Now we understand this way of life as participation in the Trinity: the three persons of God united in eternal relationship with each other inviting us into a communion of love with them and with all other created beings.

Médaille hoped that the Congregation would spread throughout the whole Church. (*Eucharistic Letter, 3*) His hopes were realized because the sisters responded to the signs of the times in new, creative and courageous ways.



## OUR REALITY

Today the world calls us to respond again in new ways, to look for meaning in a world and society that seems to have lost its way. We resonate with the call of the Earth Charter to live differently. Yet, we are appalled by the horrors of our time---war, genocide, disease, global warming, the insensitivity to all inhabitants of Earth, and indifference to the life of Earth. Cardinal Oscar Rodriguez of Honduras describes this reality in a speech he gave in Guatemala in 2003 when talking about the United States' invasion of Iraq. He said that the United States did not find weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, but they are all around us in the form of poverty, racism, social injustice, and the violation of human rights.

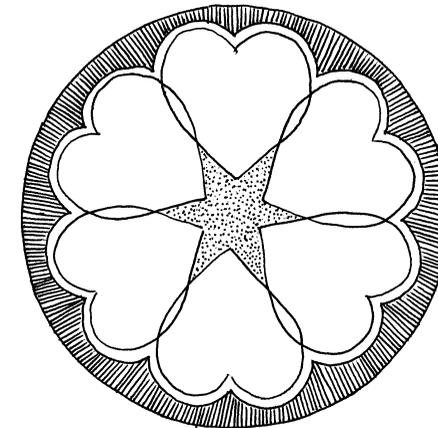
The global community lacks awareness that we even need *"personal and social healing that requires us to awaken from the cultural trance we are in that deadens us to what is possible."* (Aftab Omer) We are frustrated by inadequate responses to this century's dilemmas.

Our world, church, families and communities are polarized. We see this daily on TV, in the newspapers, movies, lectures, government pronouncements, books and most importantly in our own experiences.

*"I can communicate instantly across the world. But can I communicate with the Muslim or Hindu or Sikh who lives in my street? We have conquered every distance except one—the distance between human beings."* (Rabbi Jonathan Sacks)

## OTHER APPLICATIONS

In addition to local community use, we encourage this practice to be used as widely throughout the Congregation as possible. Those in community who live alone are invited to find creative ways of implementing this treasure given to us by Fr. Jean Pierre Médaille and practiced by our first sisters. Associates or others who choose to intentionally live the charism and spirituality of the Congregation of St. Joseph might also use this practice. For example, Associates might use this simple form of practice with their families, as well as at Associate meetings. State of the Heart and Order of the House might be an appropriate tool to assist a ministerial staff or faith community to become more intentional in living the Gospel.



State of the Heart and Order of the House have the potential of being leaven in the broader faith community, the workplace, the neighborhood, our society, indeed in the world. Those utilizing the practice will participate in co-creating God's Design for a just, peaceful and loving world where the prayer of Jesus is made manifest—"May they all be one as you Father are in me and I am in you. May they be one in us; so that the world may believe that you have sent me" [John 17:21].

## DISCERNMENT AND ITS GIFTS

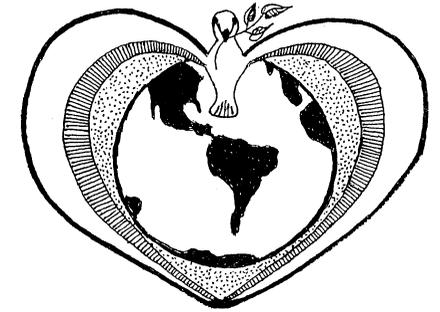
Sharing the State of the Heart and the Order of the House is a tool to listen for the movement of the Spirit within the community. It can help us discern in an ongoing manner if we are being faithful to the mission and how we might minister to the needs of the "dear neighbor", while being conscious of our gifts and limitations. We witness to and with one another the presence of God among us and the fruits of God's presence. Any decision arrived at by the community as a result of having reflected on the Order of the House can be tested with the question, Does it contribute to fullness of life and unioning love in the world?

What we might hope for in the practice of State of the Heart and Order of the House would include the following:

- \* expanded trust and love of the "dear neighbor" with whom we are sharing;
- \* increased depth of consciousness regarding the interconnectedness of all creation and our mission of unioning love and reconciliation;
- \* greater awareness of God's activity in the world thus, strengthening faith and hope;
- \* a fuller responsiveness to the stirring of the Spirit, the ability to be a word, an act of God in our time;
- \* development of the habit of nonviolence;
- \* personal and communal growth and healing;
- \* a growing sense of what it is to live the charism and mission of the Congregation of St. Joseph in our world now and into the future.

## NONVIOLENCE

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century Gandhi, Dorothy Day, Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela used the humble, seemingly weak instrument of nonviolent loving action to address pervasive injustice and racism. Like Jesus, this required of them self-emptying, radical discipleship. It called them to act with hope in the face of hopelessness over many decades for the common good of the world. They dedicated themselves to what we in the Congregation of St. Joseph call the mission of unioning love.



The practice of sharing the State of the Heart and the Order of the House offers us a concrete way to be in communion with each other and attentive to God's activity and presence in our lives and our world. Perhaps the discipline of contemplating our lives and the world with others is a way of practicing nonviolence in the Congregation of St. Joseph today.

Nonviolence calls us to choose engagement over distance, relationship and community over isolation and separateness, contemplation of the world instead of ignoring a world in need of healing and reconciling love. These disciplines require of us time for contemplating our lives and the world, humility in sharing life as it is, openness to the other without distinction. They call us to disarm our hearts, to live in God's great love for all people, and to make peace in the world. We need to enter into such transformation consistently and to open ourselves to be made ONE with each other, God, and the universe. Then we can glimpse and share as weak, apt instruments in the dynamic, expansive communion of the very life of God.

## WHAT IS REQUIRED OF US

Just as our foremothers were creative and innovative in how they responded to their times, we too are called to act in creative ways that require a paradigm shift. Thinking through our hearts could help us shift paradigms. Today we call this emotional intelligence. This term is used to describe a complex ability to regulate our impulses, empathize with others and persist and be resilient in the face of obstacles. This activates under-used parts of the heart and brain.



We believe the practice of the State of the Heart and the Order of the House will help us grow in emotional intelligence and lead us to engage one another in breaking cycles of violence. The ripple effect of responding with compassion could stimulate the **globalization of love**.

## ORDER OF THE HOUSE

Order of the House is an opportunity for communal contemplation. After the community spends some time hearing each member's State of the Heart, they reflect together on how the Holy Spirit is moving among them, within their communal heart.

The following questions may be helpful for this reflection:

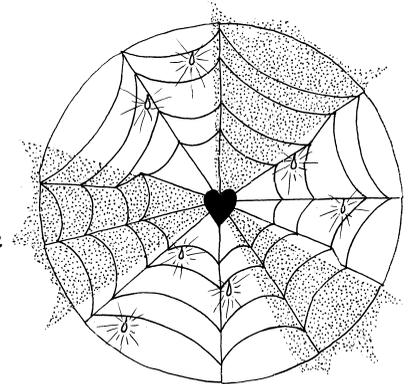
- How do we see God's love moving in these stories?
- How do these stories reflect our responses to God's love?
- How do we see God working in our lives?

What is moving in each of us as we listen to our reflections?  
How are our hearts being moved, challenged, inspired, drawn?  
Each person seeks to name what is happening within.

Then the community asks:

- What do we look like as a group?
- What seems to be coming together for us?
- What is opening up as possibility?
- How do we respond?

Finally, what symbol or image represents God's action in us? The group reflects on a word of wisdom, song, phrase, poem, scripture, maxim, or anything that captures how they were moved during communal reflection. Together they name a symbol or image and then reflect on how it might guide the group's remembering until the next meeting. (Marcia Allen, csj and Bette Moslander, csj)



## STATE OF THE HEART

The following are some guidelines that may assist when preparing for sharing the State of the Heart.

First, we are invited to remember the works of zeal in which we have been engaged recently. Works of zeal are any encounter or experience or event of our lives in relation to any creature or to ourselves. Quite simply, we ask: What are all of the things, big and little, that have occurred in my life since last I sat down to remember? Choose one or several incidents and reconstruct them according to time, place, persons, my actions, outcomes and how I felt at the time.

Second, we consider what we have remembered and ask ourselves questions similar to the following: How does this experience remind me of other events in my life? How does it mirror a scripture or a maxim? Is there a pattern or a theme in my life that this event relates to? How am I feeling as I remember it?

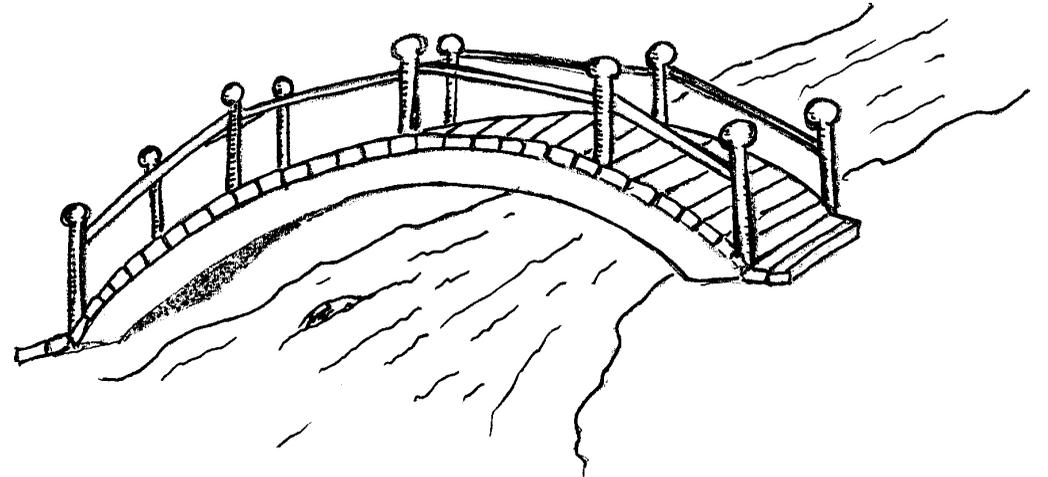
Last of all, we listen for movements within: What is moving in me now? Am I being drawn to something deeper? To gratitude? To action? What inclinations or desires do I sense within? What is happening within me? In this way, I feel and interpret what I have contemplated. (Marcia Allen, csj, *Obedience to Grace: Mary the Model*)

Having contemplated, I now tell my story of the works of zeal and share my reflection with the gathered community. Each person's sharing is received reverently, without critique, judgment, or comment.



## AN INVITATION FROM FR. MÉDAILLE

In *The Règlements*, our founder, Jean Pierre Médaille, SJ provided practices to guide the first sisters in their religious life. "The practices will be of two kinds: those pertaining to their own religious life and those pertaining to serving the neighbor." (p. 6) Médaille recommends yearly, monthly, weekly, and daily exercises. Under weekly exercises it is written "...they all will choose an [interior] place of retreat suited to the liturgical season in order to remain entirely united in God; they will confer for a half hour on the state of their Congregation (we refer to this as Order of the House) and the works of zeal ordinarily done" (known to us as State of the Heart). (p. 8)



Under daily exercises Médaille writes, "Then they will begin [their] work [at home], sharing with each other the experiences of their meditation in humility and candor until time for Mass." (p. 9) This is part of the context out of which the sisters prepare for the State of the Heart. The context also included: ministry to the "dear neighbor" meaning "...all of the spiritual and corporal works of mercy of which women are capable," work that supported the community (*lace making at that time*), recreation, communal

## AN INVITATION FROM FR. MÉDAILLE (continued)

prayer, Eucharist, spiritual reading and its discussion in community (p. 9), personal meditation, and the daily Examen.

Thus, the State of the Heart and Order of the House do not stand alone as a central practice, but are included in a way of life that integrates body, intellect, emotions and spirit in pursuit of the mission of the total double union. The daily intentional living of this way of life enables recognition of the movement of the Holy Spirit in each member, in the community, and in the events of daily life and of the world.

Médaille does not give an outline on how the State of the Heart or Order of the House might be shared and prayed, thus there is no “right or wrong way” of doing this practice. Médaille does offer cautions and bits of wisdom in the Maxims, especially Maxims 62-100. These cautions remind us that God and the “dear neighbor” are our focus. They invite us to avoid the natural tendency to dwell on the ego-self which can distract us from our mission of unioning love.

## PREPARATION FOR STATE OF THE HEART AND ORDER OF THE HOUSE

What would preparation for State of the Heart and Order of the House look like today? Looking at the components, it would seem that State of the Heart and Order of the House presume a balanced life: work, community, prayer, leisure. It points to a contemplative life stance, a fidelity to contemplating the face of God in all relationships—with self, every sort of “dear neighbor” (community member, those encountered in ministry, and all those whose lives touch ours in the web of life, indeed all creation), and every level of community (local, congregational, neighborhood, city, country, church, international, and earth itself).

Contemplation might occur during: personal meditation or study, the practice of the Examen of Consciousness, pondering the evening news, movies, etc., or through mindfulness in all the activities of the day. *The Règlements* seems also to suggest that communal discussion of pertinent reading, and communal sharing of spiritual insights or God experiences may also be used to prepare for sharing the State of the Heart and the Order of the House.