

CONVERSATIONS . . .

September 2010

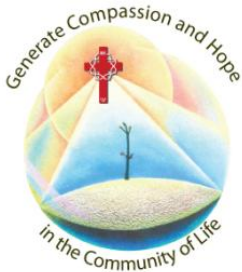
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...with Judy Cannato

“When each of us vibrates love and compassion, our energy mysteriously unites with the energy of love and compassion all over the planet, augmenting the field of compassion, making its resonance, manifestation, and influence a very powerful force for transformation and healing. . . . Could there be any greater cause for hope in the community of life?” [Judy Cannato]



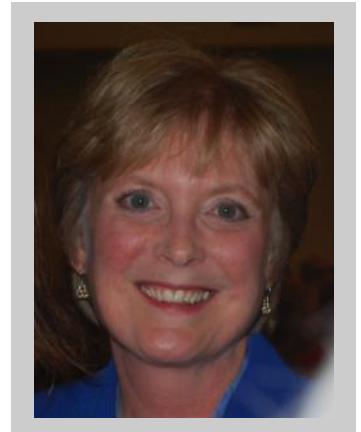
“A New Story” by Mary Southard,CSJ



Franciscan Sisters of the Poor
2008 General Chapter Direction Statement

Peace and all good to you!

We continue our series of conversations, exploring the deeper meaning of our General Chapter direction: "Generate compassion and hope in the community of life."



Here is an enlightening interview with Judy Cannato, the author of **Radical Amazement** and **Field of Compassion**: both of these books present a rich vision of spirituality as seen through the expanding lens of the New Cosmology and its implications. Ms. Cannato is a theology teacher, retreat facilitator and spiritual director and has written and lectured extensively on spirituality. She is an Associate member of the Congregation of St. Joseph of LaGrange and is married with two sons. This issue of **Conversations** focuses on the transformative nature of compassion. Ms. Cannato tells us that, "**When we resonate with love, when we are living, breathing vibrations of love energy, we contribute to the Field of Compassion.**" We are privileged to have Ms. Cannato share her prophetic insights. We hope that you visit our website frequently and we invite you to join us in our mission to generate compassion and hope in the community of life.

Sister Tiziana Merletti, sfp
Congregational Minister
and Council

Judy, in *Field of Compassion*, you unite the Universe Story and the Christian Story from a theological perspective and tell us that salvation is not about "me" or "we," but about the cosmos as a whole. Can you say more about this?

In essence, what we need to be "saved" from is our own egocentricity, that part of us that is rooted in fear and sustained by our effort to control. Egocentricity makes for a very small "me." It fosters the illusion that we are separate from others. It fails to see



the connectedness that is the foundation of all life. It does not grasp that "all that is" is sustained by relationship. **We are who we are through connection, not through separation.**

We are participants in an immense creative event. **One way to speak about creation is to say that it is the ongoing single action of the Spirit.** From the Big Bang forward, through the evolution of stars and galaxies, to the emergence of life on this planet in all

its forms, as well as **in the ongoing expansion of the cosmos, the Holy One is at work** – pulsating, pressing from within this single creation, enabling it to become more and more and more. I think it is critical that we get this point. **There is only a single creation, the one in which we live and move and have our being.** Therefore, any notion of salvation that imagines anything smaller than “all that is” is deficient.

Because life is so intricately interwoven, not one of us is saved until all of us are saved. Salvation in this context is a single process involving the whole of creation.

Now, for that to happen each one of us must accept responsibility to evolve personally as completely as we can. Each of us must engage the capacity for autopoiesis – literally “self creation.” Each of us must become as fully human and fully alive as we can. And by doing that we become human beings capable of connection in healthy, creative ways – ways that contribute to the evolution of the species and the cosmos.

In your opinion how is the New Cosmology transforming spiritual life, especially in generating and practicing compassion? How is humanity evolving as a result of these new understandings?

Every aspect of our lives is rooted in a particular world view, a paradigm, a lens through which we view our experience. The spiritual life is no exception. The new cosmology challenges the old world view that sees the cosmos as a machine composed of separate pieces and parts. It asserts that **the world is an organic whole, a single creation in which everything is connected in an integral way.** Of course mystics have always asserted that **all creation is a unified whole**, but most human beings have not lived out of that kind of consciousness because we have been unable to grasp the



fundamental unity that is the foundation of mystical consciousness.

The new cosmology – through the discoveries at both the quantum and astrophysics level, and now captured so vividly in images from the Hubble Space Telescope – shows us in a very concrete way that connectedness. It exposes us to an evolving universe. It gives us a sense of the immensity of creation and how we are part of its continued emergence. In other words, **the new cosmology gives us a boost toward mystical consciousness, which transforms our spiritual life.** Once we grasp

the fundamentals of the new cosmology, we cannot relate to the Holy, one another, or creation in the same way again. **Recognizing that we belong to the cosmos and that the cosmos is rooted in us transforms all of our relationships. Knowing that “all is one,” that the “other” in some way is “my self” generates responses and relationships that are characterized by care and compassion.**

As the number of human beings who practice this way of seeing increases, humanity as a whole will be transformed. One way to speak of the transformation is to say that a morphic field has emerged and continues to grow, and as it grows it attracts those who will enter in and then live out of the compassionate awareness that we are all one.

Your work calls us to be co-creators with God - especially through incarnating the four attitudes of: spaciousness, contemplation, commitment, and imagination. How do these stances free us to become more compassionate and live more compassionately?



Those who are truly co-creative operate out of this expanded consciousness that recognizes the fundamental unity of all creation. Spaciousness is a capacity that allows us to move from “me” to “we.” The word “compassion” literally means “to suffer from the bowels.” To me that indicates not that I have entered into the other’s space in some empathic way, but that **I have allowed the presence of the other to somehow enter into my space, to become part of my awareness and spirit. I hold the other in a way that acknowledges we are one.** *Contemplation* is closely related to

spaciousness. Indeed, we could say that **spaciousness proceeds from contemplation, which is essentially the capacity to see.** An old definition of contemplation is “to take a long, loving look at the real.” Often we move at such a fast pace and are so filled with pre-judgments that we fail to see what is before us. I am an advocate of meditation – some kind of practice that slows us down and opens us up, teaching us to see what is



real, both within and without. Such a practice enables us to become contemplative.

While seeing and being spacious are essential, they are not enough. We must commit ourselves

to living from that kind of space. **Commitment involves action that operates in integrity with our spaciousness and contemplative seeing.** It is not enough to acknowledge the fundamental unity of the cosmos and all its beings. Every action we take must somehow reflect this notion. The ideal is that our commitment is informed by spaciousness and the contemplative stance. In that way our actions are not compulsive and we set intentions that are co-creative.

Finally, it is through the imagination that the expression of this new level of consciousness finds itself. **We are the first generation to see so tangibly the fundamental connection of all that is. This presses us to live out of a very new space. We have no maps, no definitions – we simply entrust ourselves to imaginations that have been entrusted to Spirit. That is co-creative living.**

Judy, you tell us that: "When we resonate with love, when we are living, breathing vibrations of love energy, we contribute to the Field of Compassion." What implications does this have for us and all creation?



"Dancing Francis" By Terri Laurela, OSF

Over one hundred years ago Albert Einstein startled humankind with the revelation $E=mc^2$. Matter and energy, he asserted, are simply two manifestations of the same thing. The new consciousness invites a shift not only away from materialism, but, from a much deeper place, it invites us to move away from seeing ourselves as primarily physical, material beings. **We are bundles of energy,**

manifestations of energetic vibrations that operate at a very subtle level. And while the energy may be subtle, it is nevertheless real.

Since some find this energy language a little difficult to grasp, perhaps an example will help. Our emotions are systems of energy that are relatively easy to recognize.

So let's do this energy exercise. . .

- First, stop for a moment and get in touch with a time when you were very angry.
- Notice the energy – the resonance it carries, how that energy affects your pulse or stomach or other parts of your body, how it affects your mood and whole being. Once you've done that . . .
- Shift to a time in which you were filled with joy and get in touch with that energy in the same kind of way.
- Doesn't that have quite a different energetic feel to it? When you are angry or joyful (or any other emotion state), whether aware of it or not, the actions that flow from you are steeped in that energy. You could even say the energy itself translates into action. You don't have to plan angry responses or program joyful ones. What you do flows out of the energy you manifest at the moment.
- Now imagine yourself filled with love and compassion. Get deeply rooted in that energy and feel its expression within yourself. As long as you vibrate with that energy, you will express love and compassion in what you do. The challenge is to be able to resonate with the energy of love and compassion all the time.

We know that energy is bound together in non-material regions of influence known as

“fields.” And we know that compassion itself is an intensely vibrant field that holds the kind of energy necessary to transform humankind, heal the planet, and participate co-creatively in the evolution of the cosmos. When each of us vibrates love and compassion, our energy mysteriously unites with the energy of love and compassion all over the planet, augmenting the field of compassion, making its resonance, manifestation, and influence a very powerful force for transformation and healing. Could there be any greater cause for hope in the community of life?

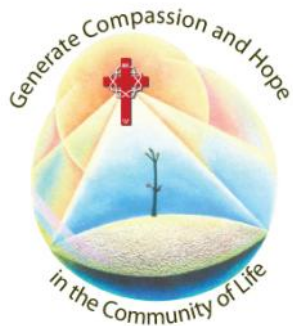
Questions for Reflection:

How is the New Cosmology transforming the decisions you take in your life, especially in practicing compassion?

What was it like for you to engage yourself in the energy exercise (above)? Can you share any self insights?

Judy Cannato tells us, “. . . Compassion itself is an intensely vibrant field that holds the kind of energy necessary to transform humankind, heal the planet, and participate co-creatively in the evolution of the cosmos.” Do you see a connection with the healing charisma and/or your own life?

How is the reality of a “Field of Compassion” a cause for hope for you?



Cover art:
“A New Story”
Mary Southard, CSJ
Congregation of St. Joseph of LaGrange
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