

A Quarterly Newsletter of the Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual

## Apologies Are in Order

By Mary E. Hunt

Pope John Paul II's historic and sweeping apology this season raises a host of issues about the nature of forgiveness, guilt and good manners. His action is a very welcome first step. But many people, including learned commentators, are scratching their heads because something about it isn't quite right. Better, it is not enough, even though it is a step in the right direction. While I am loath to focus too much attention on the Vatican for any reason, insights from feminist ethical work illuminate the promising religious action at hand and point to some possible ways to parlay it into something useful.

Apologies, and quite precise ones at that, are important because they function as what some linguists call "performative utterances." The speaker attempts to actually do what the words convey. So when we teach our children to say, "I'm sorry," we are really teaching them more than just the words and grammar. We are teaching them that by using those words in that way they are acting in just and often generous ways. Likewise, "I love you" is a performative utterance that conveys the message of love. Saying it makes it so.

How we humans long to hear those words—

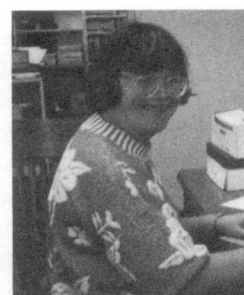
"I'm sorry" and "I love you"—and with what great expectations. The absence of such words can provoke even greater disappointment. Thus the concern for specifics, in this case from the Pope about Jews, Catholic women and others, is not trivial. Nor is it lack of gratitude for the sweeping statement. It is, rather, the invitation to make the apology real and meaningful by fleshing it out, literally. Otherwise, it does not "perform."

A feminist first principle is that the personal is political. The papal apology was issued by the Pope for Catholic individuals who have erred. It was not issued on behalf of the Catholic Church as a whole, which, as its theology would have it, cannot sin because it is divinely inspired. However, while individuals make horrible mistakes, institutions, too, are culpable for what is perpetrated in their names. To argue otherwise is to pass over the reality of a corporate identity and act as if everything is done by fallible persons.

The law recognizes institutions in all their institutionality. So, too, must ethics. In this case, the Vatican cannot have it both ways. Either we hold each individual by name and

(Continued on page 2)

*Likewise, sins are not just against individuals, but have their corporate nature as well.*



WATER works with the help of people like Caprina Donaldson (top) and Peggy Wyss (see page 8).

### Editorial

The Catholic Bishop of the Diocese of Arlington, Virginia, banned Diann Neu, Mary Hunt and artist Mary Lou Sleevi from speaking at a local retreat facility run by Dominican Sisters. His action, taken without the courtesy of consulting us, and with the ever-present pressure of conservative Catholics, distressed us deeply but did not stop our work. Our response to the bishop (see page 3) is meant to signal another way of handling such ecclesial slights, one that mirrors our organizational commitment to respectful dialogue and gets on with the tasks at hand.

WATER is an interfaith, internationally connected feminist educational center that

works in collegial relationships with organizations and persons who seek to bring about social justice. As such, we will not engage in back and forth rhetoric, nor dignify with a response comments that have no bearing on our mission. We recommend this strategy to others, lest we unwittingly give power to those who seek to hamper our efforts by letting them define the terms of debate and distract us from our work.

We appreciate the many expressions of support from our friends and colleagues. One particularly telling one came from theologian Mary Condren in Ireland: "Darlings, if you weren't banned I'd be worried." Now let's get

on with the work that attracted so much attention: justice for all.

One way to do that is to participate in the Million Mom March, Mother's Day, May 14 in Washington, DC, and other cities to call for effective gun control laws. More controversial but no less important is the Millennium March on Washington, April 30, for lesbian/gay/bisexual and transgendered rights. If demonstrating is not your cup of tea, write an article, call a member of Congress, pray, hug a child, do something that makes concrete your commitment to justice at a time when forces against it are revving up anew.



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WATER is a feminist educational center, a network of justice-seeking people that began in 1983 in response to the need for serious theological, ethical and liturgical development for and by women. We work locally, nationally and internationally doing programs and projects, publications and workshops, counseling and liturgical planning which help people to actualize feminist religious values and bring about social change.

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## Apologies...

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payroll number accountable for specific deeds, or we expect the institution to take some responsibility. Rather than splitting hairs over infallibility, it is much more prudent to embrace the blame.

Likewise, sins are not just against individuals but have their corporate nature as well. The Holocaust is a collective noun, however inadequate, to describe the killing of millions. One regrets each death, but one also regrets the whole unspeakable episode in all of its historical enormity. Whether the Pope had the moral insight to name that atrocity in unmistakable terms and ask forgiveness for the Catholic Church's complicity is one concern. But the larger point is that even the approximation, inadequate as it was, prompts the rest of us as moral agents on our own terms, from various traditions and perspectives, to do the job.

Apologies are as useful as what flows from them, namely, resolve not to sin again and reparations for past actions. Feminist therapists, pastors and theologians, especially those who work with victims/survivors of sexual abuse, have made long strides toward more adequate modes of apology. Realizing the tremendous harm that we humans can do to one another, they have fixed on the importance of perpetrators saying the words and backing them up with action.

This is remarkably parallel to the classical Christian theological approach to sin. It begins not with forgiveness, but with the one who has committed the wrong asking forgiveness. When pardon is pronounced, he/she must follow up with a firm affirmation to stop acting in the sinful way. Finally, he/she offers some concrete form of restitution for the harm caused. Only then is the process complete. Ask any incest survivor whose father has begged her pardon. It is a necessary step toward healing. Anything else is what Dietrich Bonhoeffer called "cheap grace."

Great amounts of guilt have been laid on those, especially women, who do not forgive persons who commit unseemly acts against them. The patriarchal logic that it was better to "forgive and forget" even if the perpetrator never asked forgiveness gained widespread echo in the non-feminist therapeutic

*But the dangers of inadequate  
atonement and premature  
pardon are rampant.*

community. But the dangers of inadequate atonement and premature pardon are rampant. Recidivism is high among abusers, so too among totalitarian regimes. Historical memories are short; one generation away from the Holocaust, we tend to forget or downplay the terror, worse, repeat aspects of it, in the case of Rwanda in the past few years. The growing rise of nationalism in Austria and the power of the U.S. right wing make many nervous. That is why the high expectations generated by the Pope's moves were merited.

Good manners come into play as well. Conservative talk radio show host Dr. Laura Schlessinger made a major faux pas recently. Her anti-gay rhetoric is out of control. Many activists requested that she turn down the volume, as it were. She even got the phrase out: "Regrettably, some of the words I've used hurt some people, and I am sorry for that." Then, when thanked for her step in the right direction but faced with the inadequacy of her effort, she backpedaled completely and called her statement not an apology but a "clarification." So much for performative utterances. Bad form, Doctor.

What would make for a clean slate in these cases? Probably nothing. But apologies (even clarifications) are the easy step. Then the hard work begins, when persons and groups, individuals and institutions must change their ways. I can think of a few obvious ways the Vatican might change, like treating women and lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgendered people as full members of that church, and changing words and abandoning texts that are anti-Semitic, for starters. But those are for them to embrace, not for me to dictate. Ditto for Dr. Laura, for whom some continuing education courses on sexology, biology and ethics would be in order. But she, too, has to decide.

Reparations are still another matter. Making up for wrongs calls for creativity. Most of all it calls for justice, and that is the process that apologies set in motion. May it continue.

*Mary E. Hunt, Ph.D., feminist liberation theologian and ethicist, co-founded and co-directs WATER.*

# Shared Garden Follow-Up

By Monica Maher

*"Somos un círculo, dentro de un círculo, sin principio y sin final."  
(We are a circle, within a circle, without beginning and without end.)*

Forty-eight women from 13 countries stood chanting in a spiral under the stars at the opening ritual of the "School of Ecofeminist Spirituality and Ethics: Myths and Powers," held on the coast of Chile from January 17-27. Sponsored by Con-spirando, the Chilean collective of ecofeminism, spirituality and theology, the course served to deepen and consolidate at the regional level the processes begun at the three Shared Gardens coordinated by WATER, Con-spirando, and Pe No Chao of Northeast Brazil.

As a participant in the Shared Gardens in Santiago in January, 1997, and Recife, Brazil, in July, 1998, I was thrilled to return to Chile as one of two North Americans, along with Madonna Kolbenschlag, a presenter at the July, 1997, Garden in Washington, DC. The delightful setting in Quisco demanded an opening of the senses: a sunny, hill-top garden filled with fragrant yellow and red roses, flowering fruit trees, cool breezes and a dramatic view of the deep blue Pacific. Within this spacious and inviting expanse, contemplative, fluid and free, we reconnected to ourselves, to each other, to the Earth and to the cosmos through drawing, drama, dance, song, story-telling, and ritual. We laughed, cried, screamed, celebrated, meditated, did Tai-Chi and Shibashi, walked the labyrinth, and under the first full moon of the Millennium lit a fire and feasted.

The diversity of participants, not only by nationality but also by age, ethnicity, religious affiliation and occupation, made for a passionate and energizing exchange. What a privilege to be part of building relationships with so many committed women! Women like Alcira, who leads workshops in natural medicine and spirituality in Bolivia; Maria de la Luz, who does feminist theologizing and community organizing in Honduras; Rosa, who directs a rural women's health center in Peru; Maria Teresa, who works with indigenous women's groups in war-torn Chiapas. These are but a few.

We began with personal experience, expressed in and through the perceptions and histories of our bodies, placed in socio-historical and cosmological context. We analyzed, deconstructed and reconstructed diverse myths, including Mayan, Celtic and Christian, exploring our own internalized meanings with an eye toward transforming them to reflect a liberationist ethic of power mutuality. Madonna presented a breathtaking panorama of Goddess images from pre-patriarchal times to the present, linking them to our psychological development as women. These and other exercises served to spark our deepest dreams, yearnings and imaginings; new understandings, interpretations and symbols emerged through a powerful process of individual/group creativity and growth. Meanwhile, attentive facilitators synthesized and systematized the process and offered it back to us as our daily bread. How exciting to see the foundational elements of our collective theology emerge!

Most inspiring of all is the assurance that these dynamic women will take the energy and learning of this encounter to their distinct contexts to share sensitively and appropriately with other women. It was evident at this course how quickly women's groups throughout the Americas have owned, modified and multiplied the experiences from the three Shared Gardens. The abundant fruits, stemming from women's hunger, enthusiasm and irreversible momentum, reinforce the importance of such spaces that bring grass-roots activists/theologians together across boundaries. Women are indeed alive, and magic is unmistakably afoot in this exciting, international spiraling of feminist theologizing/ritualizing!

*"We are a circle, within a circle, without beginning and without end."*

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Monica Maher was graduated last year from Harvard Divinity School in Cambridge, MA. She holds the distinction of being WATER's first intern, in 1984.

## Dear Bishop

(WATER's response to Bishop Loverde's ban)

International Women's Day/Ash Wednesday  
March 8, 2000

Bishop Paul S. Loverde  
Chancery Office  
200 North Glebe Road, Suite 704  
Arlington VA 22203

Dear Bishop Loverde:

Greetings on International Women's Day and Ash Wednesday. We wish you a festive celebration of the achievements of women around the world as well as a prayerful start to the Lenten Season.

We write to respond to your recent article in the **Catholic Herald** detailing your decision to cancel us as speakers at Dominican Retreat in McLean, VA. We are deeply troubled by this decision, both for what it conveys about your view of our work and because of the process involved. In the spirit of hospitality that is foundational to our faith, we extend an invitation to you to join us for discussion.

The Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual is an ecumenical educational center that works with a broad constituency to bring about religiously informed social justice from a feminist perspective. Rather than enter into a detailed rebuttal and further escalate the scandal caused by your action, we invite you come to WATER at your convenience to discuss with us the many issues on which we agree, beginning with opposition to the death penalty, efforts to eradicate racism and efforts to bring about economic justice. With that basis of trust, we could have a fruitful discussion of the difficult issues on which we indeed disagree, for example, the ordination of women, reproductive choice and homosexuality. But in all, the process would reflect the collegial, respectful way in which mature, committed Catholics, especially those of us who are theologically trained, engage one another in dialogue. That, for us, is what has been missing thus far in this unfortunate situation.

We assure you of a cordial welcome and a glass of the pure filtered water that we offer to all of our guests. We await your reply so that we may arrange your visit.

Cordially,

Mary E. Hunt      Diann L. Neu  
MDiv, Ph.D.      MDiv, STM, MSW  
Co-directors



*Pentecost is the birthday of the Christian church, the day the Holy Spirit comes to Her people. This Pentecost liturgy, abbreviated from the original, recognizes the presence of the divine Sophia-Spirit. WATER invited thirteen Washington, DC, area feminist communities together for this liturgy. Use it as a model for the Pentecost your community celebrates.*

### Preparation

*Choose a space outside for this liturgy. Hang colored cloths from tree branches. Put three altars with red woven cloths in the center of a circle of chairs: one holds baskets filled with three different breads, goblets of juice and wine, and red napkins; another holds an oil lamp; and the third has chimes, pinwheels and bubbles for the children. Have a sheet of songs for each participant. Invite three women to bless bread, four to read, and several to dance.*

**Song:** "Come, Sophia Spirit, Come," Nigerian, adapted from **Bring the Feast: Songs from the Re-imagining Community**, Pilgrim Press, 1998.

*(A dancer welcomes Sophia-Spirit.)*  
Come, Sophia Spirit, come.  
Come, all loving Spirit, come.  
Come, come, come.

### Call to Gather

Welcome to our Pentecost Liturgy, "Come Sophia-Spirit." Today is Pentecost, the birthday of the church. This is the day the Holy Spirit comes to her people. Sophia is her Greek name, Wisdom her English name, Chokmah her Hebrew name, Sapientia her Latin name.

Who is Sophia? Why do we speak about Sophia-Spirit today? Jewish Wisdom theology talks about God as Sophia, Divine Woman Wisdom, who appears as God's own being. In the writings of the early Christian community Sophia seems to disappear, yet a deeper reading shows that Sophia assumes the functions of the Spirit. Spirit-Sophia's presence is God's Spirit. Early Jesus traditions called Jesus Sophia's prophet and Christ-Sophia. Divine Woman Wisdom, Sophia-Spirit, God with us, continues her call for the liberation of all women, children and men from patriarchy and kyriarchy. This is what we celebrate today. Please echo after me:

May Sophia-Spirit rise inside me  
like a rushing wind. *(Echo)*

May Sophia-Spirit leap within us  
like a revolutionary fire. *(Echo)*

May Sophia-Spirit flow through the world  
like a life-giving breath. *(Echo)*

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Let us share and receive her spirit. *(Light lamp.)*

**Song:** "Come, Sophia Spirit, Come,"

### Introductions

Why is WATER gathering communities together on Pentecost? Many of us meet regularly in our small communities. Sometimes we need to feel the energy when people from base communities, women's prayer circles and women-church liturgy groups join together. This is that time.

We come from a variety of communities today. Let us hear the names of the communities represented here. Someone call out the name of your group and then add, "Sophia-Spirit is here." *(Group naming)*

Look around. Notice the faces among us. Turn to those around you and introduce yourself by saying, "Hi! I'm \_\_\_\_\_ *(name)*. Sophia-Spirit is here." *(Introductions)*

**Song:** "Sing Lo! Sing, O Sophia," African American Spiritual. Words adapted by Miriam Therese Winter, from **Songlines**, 1996.

*(Refrain)* Sing lo! Sing, O Sophia!  
Wisdom come to widen my heart.  
Sing lo! Sing, O Sophia!  
Wisdom, come abide in my heart.

### Prayer for Justice

*(Four women pray:)*

1. Come, Sophia-Spirit, embrace us and free us.
2. Come, Sophia-Spirit, enter into our longing.
3. Come, Sophia-Spirit, renew our passion for justice and beauty.
4. Come, Sophia-Spirit, breathe vitality into our struggles for change.

1. When we are fearful, challenge us.
  2. When we are lonely, give us community.
  3. When we are hurting, heal us.
  4. When we are weary, open us to new dreams.
- 1-4. We ask this in your name.  
1-4. Amen. Blessed Be. Let It Be So.

**Chant:** "Veni, Sancte Spiritus" *(in parts)*

**Reading:** The Pentecost Story, Acts 2:1-21, adapted by Diann Neu.

*(Setting: Readers and dancers kneel together in the center of the circle, praying aloud quietly, "Sophia-Spirit, come." All chant, "Veni, Sancte Spiritus." The narrator begins:)*

**N:** When the day of Pentecost came, they were all gathered in the same place. They came from many communities and regions, young and older, speaking many languages of different professions, religious people who practiced their

faith in various ways. They came from all corners of the land *(name the places of those gathered)*. Suddenly they heard the sound of a rushing wind shaking the house where they were. Something that looked like tongues of fire hovered above each one of them. *(The dancers rise and swirl cloths over the heads of the kneelers, who then stand.)*

**N:** Suddenly, all of them, women, men and children, realized that they were filled with the power of Sophia-Spirit. *(Dancers swirl cloths around all participants.)* They began to speak in different languages in the power of the Spirit.

**Chant:** Veni, Sancte Spiritus

**N:** Hearing this sound, a crowd assembled, devout people from every continent known on earth. All were amazed and astonished, for all

# Come So

By Dia

heard words preached in their own language.

2: Why, they're speaking Chinese!

3: They speak Serbian! It's a miracle - as though there had never been a Tower of Babel.

4: I hear them speaking Swahili!

3: Sie sprechen Deutsch!

2: Se hablan espanol!

4: "In the days to come, it is God who speaks, I will pour out my Spirit on all humanity. Your daughters and sons shall prophesy. The young shall see visions. The old shall dream dreams. I will pour out my Spirit and they shall prophesy."

**Chant:** Veni, Sancte Spiritus

**N:** Sophia-Spirit was given not only to the early community, but to us as well. To each person the Spirit gives gifts.

2: There are many gifts, but the same Spirit;

3: Many works, but the same Holy One.

4: Through Sophia-Spirit someone receives intelligence, another holiness.

2: To still others is given the gift of clarity.

3: There are those who are irresistible, free from anxiety, and humane.

4: The gifts of the Spirit are without number.

But all are from the same Spirit who distributes them as She pleases, and all are called to proclaim that Sophia-Spirit is rising in all creation.

**All:** Amen. Blessed Be. Let It Be So.

**Chant:** Veni, Sancte Spiritus



## A Pentecost Response

Filled with the gifts and power of Sophia,  
We act on the power of justice.

**All:** We act on the power of justice.

... Tears... Integrity... Affection... Sexuality...  
Work... Struggle... Friendship... Prayer

**All:** (Response after each)

## Sharing

Children, girls and boys, come around the altar. These chimes, pinwheels and bubbles are symbols of Sophia-Spirit. Sophia-Spirit is another name for God. She is our friend. Have fun now playing with these gifts of Sophia-Spirit.

Sophia-Spirit shares her gifts with each of us and with our communities. What Sophia-Spirit gifts do you bring and what Sophia-

# Sophia-Spirit

n L. Neu

Spirit gifts do you see in your community? What does it mean to see ourselves as part of something far bigger than we are? How will you use your gifts? Let us share with others around us. (Sharing)

**Chant:** Veni, Sancte Spiritus

## Prayers of the Gathered

Let us pray together. Our response is "Sophia-Spirit, flow through your people."

We pray for the people fleeing war-torn lands, especially for the women who have been raped and the families who have lost their loved ones. **Response:** Sophia-Spirit... What other prayers do we offer? Tell us and we will respond. (Praying)

## Eucharistic Prayer by Diann L. Neu

(Three blessers come to three different places in the center, face the gathered, and pray in turn:)

1. Blessed are you, Spirit-Sophia.  
With joy we give you thanks and praise for creating a diverse world  
And for creating women in your image.  
You call us to share your story,  
So we join all creation in singing your praises:

**Song:** "In Your Presence," by Colleen Fulmer, from **Dancing Sophia's Circle**, 1994.

**All:** O Wisdom Sophia, Wisdom Sophia,  
The power and presence of God.

2. Blessed are you, Spirit-Sophia.  
You create women and men in your image.  
From age to age you form us from your womb;  
You breathe your breath of life into us.  
And you call us ... (Repeat as in 1)  
**All:** O Wisdom Sophia, Wisdom Sophia...

3. Blessed are you, Spirit-Sophia.  
You call diverse women to participate in salvation history: Eve, Lilith, Sarah, Hagar, Miriam, Naomi and Ruth, Mary, Mary Magdalene, Tecla, Phoebe, Hildegard of Bingen, Sor Juana Inez de la Cruz, Sojourner Truth, Joan of Arc, Maura, Ita, Dorothy, Jean and countless others,  
And you call us...  
**All:** O Wisdom Sophia, Wisdom Sophia...

1. Blessed are you, Spirit-Sophia.  
You call us each by name  
To be prophets, teachers, leaders, saints,  
And to image your loving, challenging presence.  
And you call us ...  
**All:** O Wisdom Sophia, Wisdom Sophia...

2. Blessed are you, Spirit-Sophia.  
You have built yourself a house,  
You have hewn seven pillars,  
You have prepared a rich banquet for us.  
And you call us ...  
**All:** O Wisdom Sophia, Wisdom Sophia...

(Each blesser puts her script on the table, picks up a bread, drink and small paper with the words, and the three pray together:)

**Blessers:** Extend your hands toward the bread.  
Blessed are you, Holy Bakerwoman, Spirit-Sophia.  
In your abundant love you welcome all to the table.  
You proclaim from the rooftops,  
"Come and eat my bread, drink my wine."  
And you call us ...  
**All:** O Wisdom Sophia, Wisdom Sophia...

(Blessers put the bread and drink back on the table and face into the circle.)

3. Come, Spirit-Sophia, upon this bread and wine.  
Come as breath and breathe your life anew into our aching bones.  
Come as wind and refresh our weary souls.  
Come as fire and purge us and our church of sexism, racism, classism, heterosexism, ageism and all evils.  
And you call us ...  
**All:** O Wisdom Sophia, Wisdom Sophia...

1. Come, Soul Sister, Spirit-Sophia,  
And bring the new creation:  
The breaking of bread,  
The raising of the cup,

The doing of justice.

And you call us ...

**All:** O Wisdom Sophia, Wisdom Sophia...

2. Eat, drink and partake of the banquet of life.  
Receive the love, healing and nourishment of Spirit-Sophia. (Blessers pass bread and goblets around the group.)

**Communion Song:** "Spirit Movin' Where She Will," by Colleen Fulmer, **Her Wings**, 1989.  
(Refrain): O Spirit movin', O Spirit movin',  
O Spirit Movin', movin' within your daughters.

## Sending Forth

(The blessers pray:)

Friends of Sophia, let us go forth with courage,  
For Sophia-Spirit is with us.  
Please echo: For Sophia-Spirit is with us (Echo).

Let us go forth to liberate all women, children and men from war and violence,  
For Sophia-Spirit is with us. (Echo)  
Let us go forth to recognize the face of Sophia in all creation,  
For Sophia-Spirit is with us. (Echo)

May Sophia-Spirit rise inside me  
like a rushing wind. (Echo)  
May Sophia-Spirit leap within us  
like a revolutionary fire. (Echo)  
May Sophia-Spirit flow through the world  
like a life-giving breath. (Echo)

## Greeting of Peace

Let us share and receive Sophia's Spirit by offering one another a greeting of Pentecost Peace. Blow into your hand. Feel Sophia's breath within you. Blow this greeting to the earth and to the world. Let us offer one another a Pentecost Greeting of Peace. (Greeting)

**Song:** "Dancing Sophia's Spirit," by Colleen Fulmer from **Dancing Sophia's Circle**, 1994.  
(Dancers gather all into a spiral dance.)

Ring us round, O ancient circle,  
Sophia dancing free,  
Beauty, strength and Holy Wisdom,  
Blessing you and blessing me.

Diann L. Neu, M.Div, MSW, co-founder and co-director of WATER, is a feminist liturgist and licensed psychotherapist. Thanks to Cindy Lapp of WATER for the music in this liturgy.

## In Memory of Her

From Carol Murdock Scinto, Rockville, MD:

In memory of **Stephanie Blaschuk Zini**, dear friend of many years, whose death in February is hard to accept. She lived with artistry, loved whole-heartedly, laughed readily and rallied fiercely for justice. The glorious foxgloves in her garden in Oak Harbor, WA, bloom undimmed in my mind's eye.

From Mary Grace Crowley-Koch, Mt. Prospect, IL:

In memory of my dad, "**Bud**" Crowley, who died December 21. Eldercare of four this year, two of whom died, has been physically, emotionally hard. I love WATER in every way and all it stands for today and in the future, and make this contribution to honor my father.

From Valerie Zimmer, Chicago, IL:

In tribute to my mother, **Diana Vezmar-Bailey**, of Madison, WI, who says of WATER, "Of all the organizations close to my heart, I especially appreciate this one, because it is feminist, international, justice-seeking and spiritually grounded."

From Diann Neu and Mary Hunt, WATER:

In memory of **Maria Jacot** of Vienna, Austria, February 12, 1912-February 24, 2000, who was the youngest and longest serving director of a high school in Vienna and President of the Teacher's Union for Austria. We mourn with her dear friends **Sigrid Lindeck-Pozza**, **Marga Buhrig**, **Elsa Kahler** and **Elsi Arnold**.

You, too, can honor someone dear to you through a special gift to WATER. Write down the following information and send it with your contribution to the In Memory of Her Fund. Don't forget - words of praise and remembrance mean a lot to the living, too!

**My Name:**

**Address:**

**I wish to honor:**

Address (if living):

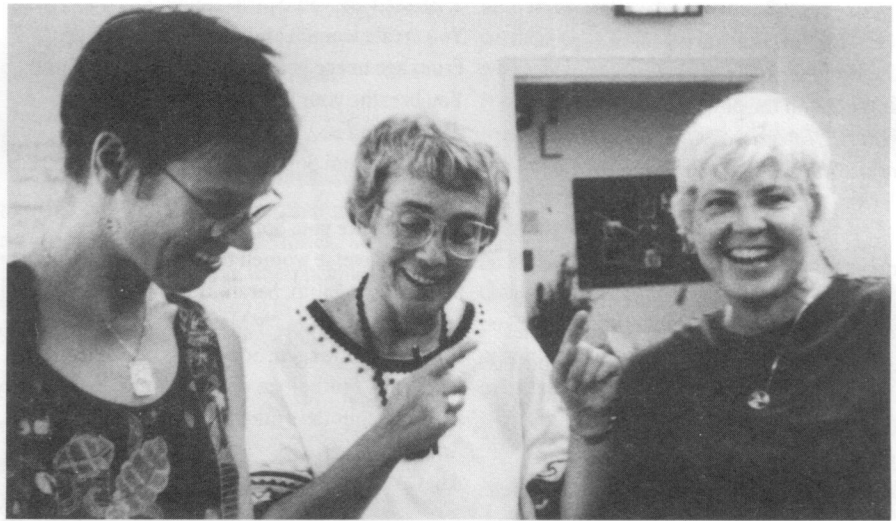
**My tribute** as I would like it to appear in

**WATERwheel** (no more than 40 words):

Please send additional copies of my tribute after it appears to:

Please publish my tribute, but don't mention my name. \_\_\_\_

No published tribute, thanks, but here's my special contribution. \_\_\_\_



*A characteristic moment with Madonna - laughing, sharing, learning, looking ahead (with Katharina von Kellenbach of St. Mary's College, Maryland, (l) and Judy Ress of Con-spirando (r) at the Shared Garden in Washington, DC, 1997.*

## Remembering Madonna Kolbenschlag

By Mary E. Hunt

One of WATER's founding members, Madonna Kolbenschlag, died suddenly of a stroke in Santiago, Chile, on January 28. She had just spent two weeks at an international women's gathering there that was the Latin American follow-up to the Shared Garden institutes in which WATER collaborated. (See Monica Maher's page 3 account of the meeting.) We mourn Madonna's untimely passing and salute her multiple contributions.

Madonna is missed by many: her family, community and colleagues, as well as thousands of people who never met her, but read her wise words. Best known for her early book, **Kiss Sleeping Beauty Goodbye** (1979), she was a woman of many talents who shared those talents widely.

After teaching at the University of Notre Dame, where she did her doctorate, she came to Washington to work as an aide to Congresswoman Mary Rose Oakar (D-Ohio). She was a researcher at the Woodstock Theological Center at Georgetown University. She edited **Between God and Caesar** (1985) and **Authority, Community and Conflict** (1986) to bring to light the problems of Vatican pressure on Catholics, especially those in the clergy and religious orders, who work in public life. Later, she wrote **Lost in**

**the Land of Oz** (1994) and **Eastward Toward Eve** (1996), in which she continued her well-informed spiritual insights.

A versatile woman, she took a turn toward psychology, completing a second doctorate and lots of clinical hours. She provided counseling and spiritual direction to many people in West Virginia, aware of how crucial good mental and spiritual health can be as part of social change strategies. Her last project was the Women's International Electronic University, a commitment to make educational resources available on an equitable basis. See [www.wvu.edu/~womensu/](http://www.wvu.edu/~womensu/).

When WATER started, Madonna was one of the small cadre of committed women who envisioned this work. Through the years she was a steady supporter, including her memorable remarks at the Washington Shared Garden in 1997. In fact, shortly before her death, she had, at my request, sent one of her books to a Chilean doctoral student of theology in Brazil. The woman received the inscribed volume after Madonna had died. When the student told me of the circumstances, we both commented appreciatively that Madonna's work continues long after her death. So it shall be as we gratefully kiss Madonna goodbye.

## Resources

Afkhami, Mahnaz, ed. *FAITH AND FREEDOM: WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE MUSLIM WORLD*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1995 (244 pages, \$17.95).

A solid overview of the struggle for women's rights as human rights for over one billion women in the world.

Beben, Mary and Bridget Mary Meehan. *WALKING THE PROPHETIC JOURNEY: EUCHARISTIC LITURGIES FOR 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY SMALL FAITH COMMUNITIES*. Boulder, CO: WovenWord Press, 1998 (86 pages, \$12 plus \$3 postage).

As many base communities celebrate "without benefit of clergy," collections like this become increasingly useful as models for how to do so with reverence, style and substance.

Boucher, Sandy. *DISCOVERING KWAN YIN, BUDDHIST GODDESS OF COMPASSION: A WOMAN'S BOOK OF RUMINATIONS, MEDITATIONS, PRAYERS, AND CHANTS*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1999 (132 pages, \$20).

A study of compassion written with compassion, this jewel of a book brings the power of the Bodhisattva home.

Brasher, Brenda E. *GODLY WOMEN: FUNDAMENTALISM AND FEMALE POWER*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1998 (216 pages, \$19).

A fascinating study of the gender divide in fundamentalist communities and what it means for women there.

Christ, Carol P. *REBIRTH OF THE GODDESS: FINDING MEANING IN FEMINIST SPIRITUALITY*. New York: Routledge, 1998 (224 pages, \$18.99).

A tale of love and discovery, a treatise on the Goddess. A first systematic theology and a good model for personal and theoretical work.

Elise-Mitchell, Rosamund and Naomi Flutter. *TALKING UP: YOUNG WOMEN'S TAKE ON FEMINISM*. North Melbourne, Vic., Australia: Spinifex Press, 1998 (239 pages, \$14.95).

Listen to the wisdom these women share and one comes away feeling optimistic about the future of feminism and the world.

Eugene, Toinette M. and James Newton Poling. *BALM FOR GILEAD: PASTORAL CARE FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN FAMILIES EXPERIENCING ABUSE*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1998 (226 pages, \$16).

An insightful volume for the whole church.

Faderman, Lillian with Ghia Xiong. *I BEGIN MY LIFE ALL OVER: THE Hmong AND THE AMERICAN IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCE*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1998 (262 pages, \$17.50).

A fine example of oral history done well. This study has the additional benefit of the author's own immigrant family story included.

Flinders, Carol Lee. *AT THE ROOT OF THIS LONGING: RECONCILING A SPIRITUAL HUNGER WITH A FEMINIST THIRST*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1999 (360 pages, \$13).

Thorough, provocative, helpful for piecing together feminism and spirituality.

Haney, Eleanor H. *THE GREAT COMMANDMENT: A THEOLOGY OF RESISTANCE AND TRANSFORMATION*. Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, 1998 (144 pages, \$12.95).

A solid treatment in feminist ethics beginning with "ecosocial location" and ending with strong visionary suggestions. The author died last year, a great loss to all.

Hutchinson, Joyce and Joyce Rupp. *MAY I WALK YOU HOME? COURAGE AND COMFORT FOR CAREGIVERS OF THE VERY ILL*. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1999 (158 pages, \$9.95).

Marvelous reflections on living with those who are dying, beautifully written, realistic, powerful. The sensitivity is impressive, the spirituality inviting.

Katzenstein, Mary Fainsod. *FAITHFUL AND FEARLESS: MOVING FEMINIST PROTEST INSIDE THE CHURCH AND MILITARY*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998 (270 pages, \$24).

Transforming hierarchical structures is a big challenge, especially ones as intransigent as the military and the Roman Catholic Church. That women are doing it with style is documented in this readable, if not always completely accurate, study.

Krueger, Caryl Waller. *FAMILY TRADITIONS: 289 THINGS TO DO AGAIN AND AGAIN*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1998 (131 pages, \$13).

As so many traditions have fallen by the wayside, this book suggests new ones to keep a family together and growing.

Martensen, Jean, ed. *SING OUT NEW VISIONS: PRAYERS, POEMS AND REFLECTIONS BY WOMEN*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1998 (104 pages, \$8).

Texts and drawings for many occasions, this ecumenical resource for worship will appeal to a wide audience. Birthing, naming, suffering, witnessing for peace and several other themes are arranged for easy use.

Nadell, Pamela S. *WOMEN WHO WOULD BE RABBIS: A HISTORY OF WOMEN'S ORDINATION, 1889-1985*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1998 (384 pages, \$30).

Jewish women made proud, powerful history en route to equality. This volume documents some important steps and influential people along the way.

O'Shea, Kathleen A. *WOMEN AND THE DEATH PENALTY IN THE UNITED STATES, 1900-1998*. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1999 (404 pages, \$69.50).

Helen Prejean brought the death penalty to public attention, and this book focuses in a sociological way on the women who have suffered and continue to suffer it in a sexist society.

Ask your library to get the book, given the price.

Roberts, Elizabeth and Elias Amidon. *PRAYERS FOR A THOUSAND YEARS: BLESSINGS AND EXPRESSIONS OF HOPE FOR THE NEW MILLENNIUM*. New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1999 (360 pages, \$15).

In the fashion of the popular *EARTH PRAYERS*, this collection by diverse writers is focused on the millennium. *WATER's* Diann Neu and Mary Hunt contributed, as did many *WATER* friends, including Rosemary Radford Ruether and Mary Ann Coyle. Use it and give it.

Spretnak, Charlene. *THE RESURGENCE OF THE REAL: BODY, NATURE, AND PLACE IN A HYPER-MODERN WORLD*. New York: Routledge, 1999 (288 pages, \$17.99).

A compelling case for another way of looking at postmodern society, putting body, nature and place aright.

Tigert, Leanne McCall. *COMING OUT THROUGH FIRE: SURVIVING THE TRAUMA OF HOMOPHOBIA*. Cleveland, OH: United Church Press, 1999 (160 pages, \$12.95).

Good insights into how to negotiate the difficult path through heterosexism and come out, as it were, in good shape. Good for churches working through these issues.

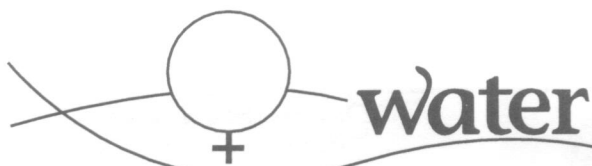
Vardy, Lucinda. *THE FLOWERING OF THE SOUL: A BOOK OF PRAYERS BY WOMEN*. New York: Ballantine, 1999 (447 pages, \$24.95).

Prayers for all occasions from a range of women including Hildegard of Bingen, Judy Grahn, Diann Neu and Barbara Deming.

Vyhmeister, Nancy, ed. *WOMEN IN MINISTRY: BIBLICAL & HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES*. Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1998 (439 pages, \$11.95).

The debate continues among Seventh Day Adventists about the ordination of women. This collection of scholarly treatments concludes that "ordination and women can go together..." History will thank the authors and editors.





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## *Making Waves*

**W**ATER continues to flow both in and beyond the office.

Congratulations and thank you to **Caprina Donaldson** of the Kennedy Institute and **Peggy Wyss** of the St. Luke's House Back-to-Work Program for their wonderful contributions to the WATER office. Their successful on-the-job training here led to a full-time job for Caprina with a government agency and to part-time employment for Peggy with a local business while she continues one day a week at WATER. WATER's commitment to training women "In A Different Style" is one way in which we give back to the community and get quality workers like Caprina and Peggy.

**Mary Hunt** was in Orange County, CA, as WATER's representative to the **National Religious Leadership Roundtable**, a coalition of groups working on sexual justice. Mary led a panel on "Roots of Commitment," including **Darlene Garner**, **Emily Culpepper**,

**Lourdes Arguelles**, **Rene Hill** and **Bob Goss**.

**Mary** and **Patricia Beattie Jung**, Professor at Loyola University of Chicago, joined **Carolyn Farrell** at Loyola's **Gannon Center for Women and Leadership** for presentations on their forthcoming edited volume, **Good Sex: Feminist Perspectives from the World's Religions** and their co-authored book-in-progress, **Just Sex**.

**Mary** spoke on "Women's Spirituality and the Difference It Makes" for Women's History Month at Utica College, Utica, NY.

**Mary** and **Diann Neu** spent a weekend in Rochester, NY, with the **Spiritus Christi Community**, a Catholic parish that functions beyond the boundaries of the institutional church. They gave talks, met with community leaders, and preached at the weekend Masses. The community is growing by leaps and bounds, expanding its ministries and struggling admirably to find its way as a "discipleship of equals."

**WATER** joins DC area **Justice and Peace Communities** saluting **Bishop Tom Gumbleton** of Detroit, MI, on his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday. We

welcome **Deborah Halter**, the new director of the **Women's Ordination Conference**.

**Diann** spoke on "Women in the Roman Catholic Church: Traditions and Tensions" for the **Bradley Hills Presbyterian Church's** series on Women, Bible and Church.

**Diann** and **Cindy Lapp** started **WATER's Spring Spirituality Series** Feminist Liturgies by giving thought and thanks to women of the world in an International Women's Day/Ash Wednesday Liturgy.

**Sharon Ringe** of **Wesley Theological Seminary** launched WATER's Spring Spirituality Series Suppers with Authors. In a new format, a candlelight soup supper with discussion, she laid out the basic contours of her wonderful new book, **Wisdom's Friends: Community and Christology in the Fourth Gospel** (Westminster John Knox Press, 1999).

