Dear Wisdom Friends,

At this time of year, wherever we look we see the beauty of springtime looking back at us. How glorious are the gifts of each season! And once again, “newsletter time” is here…the time when our committee’s hard work shows up in the form of Wisdom’s Voice.

A review of our year as Associates of Wisdom saw the addition of two Associate Candidates, now in formation. Both women are part of a Wisdom Circle in Connecticut. Bonnie Zaman, under the guidance of Maria Roja and Mary Anne Danyluk, under the guidance of Suzanne O’Brien are in the Deepening Stage of their study of Wisdom spirituality. We look forward to their presence among us as Associates of Wisdom in the future.

In the summer, along with the Daughters of Wisdom Jubilarians, we celebrated the jubilees of Margo Bromfield as well as Bill and Tatty Powers as they marked twenty-five years as members of the Associate Community. This year, another of our Associates, Lillian Scalongna, will be honored for her twenty-five years in the community. August 20th is the day to mark on your calendars.

A reminder about renewal of commitment will be sent to all in May along with a letter regarding pledges. Pledges were discussed at length at our last meeting at Star and Sr. Pat Schmidt and Maria Roja volunteered to work on a pledge letter.

In February, the ACT and our liaison, Sr. Marie Chiodo, came together for an update on Associate business. The ACT brought up the question of a future discernment process for selection of a new ACT, as our term of office expires in January 2017. This issue was discussed last November at Star and a number of suggestions were made, including having staggered terms for the members of the Associate Coordinating Team. We agreed that the process needed to have more time and discussion. This then became part of our meeting and conversation with the Provincial Leadership Team at our annual joint leadership meeting.

In March, the ACT met with the Provincial Leadership Team and we had a conversation regarding discernment of leadership and terms of the co-directors and member-at-large.  

(continued on last page)
Last year in *Wisdom’s Voice* I was writing about the urgency of clean water and water rights based on work by Sr. Margaret Galliardi. During her retreat, *The Roots of the Cosmos as Home*, last summer at Wisdom House, I have since experienced intensely and meaningfully the reality of the cosmos and of the challenges we face in living our interconnectedness with our planet and the universe. I committed to participate in JPIC in whatever way I was able and invited. I deepened my reading of *Laudato Si* and have been summoned to the urgency of climate change, volunteering in political campaigns for those candidates who support more direct action, and joining Climate Mobilization, an online group. In my life transitions I have pledged to stay in my home, not to contribute to new construction or a way of living incompatible with our Wisdom God’s call to care for our planet and people at risk. I am determined to make my old home as sustainable as possible, to do such ‘radical’—for me-- things as composting, growing vegetables, and opening our home to a low income tenant.

A less tangible change is internal, but still reaching outward. I have discerned a shift in my ability to take initiative and lead in the community organizing coalition I am part of. Maybe it’s because of increased time for prayer and contemplation, for writing. I noticed myself first volunteering to fill ‘holes’ in putting together an event, which would not have been my activity of choice! Now I am almost instinctively strategizing to assist with group dynamics issues, and being proactive in energizing the committee on Aging with Dignity I chair. Naugatuck Valley Project is no longer just advocating for the jobs and rights issues of home care workers, but expanding our research to alternative models for Aging in Community that are affordable, and not developer driven. Because of my own struggles in transitioning to retirement, a much lower income, the realities of the housing market, and confronting home maintenance and sustainability dilemmas, I am convinced we can, through advocacy, prayer and discernment, discover with the community more sustainable and responsible ways of aging consciously and celebrating our Wisdom stage of life.

My journey with Wisdom and the Associates of Wisdom has also included publishing an article on Christ Wisdom, and working on the CT Fire in our Hearts workshops with the team, allowing the deepening and strengthening needed for me and the
My active involvement with the Associates began at a meeting at Star of the Sea in 2010. I volunteered for a committee formed to prepare for a day-long presentation by Sr. Kate Keuntsler, a Canon Lawyer. Sr. Kate updated us on the history and evolution of the Associate Movement. The program was very well attended and we learned a great deal from Sister’s knowledge and experiences, especially as they applied to the aspect of internationality. This aspect plays a major role on how we are willing to “widen our tent” and is an important dynamic of the Daughters and Associates of Wisdom.

Following this I attended two weekends of Prayer and Reflection at the Montfort Fathers’ House in Litchfield in February 2012 and February 2013. The extended time together allowed for a more personal exchange on the level of the spiritual journey. The discussions on future planning and organization were very interesting and challenging.

On the second weekend the Saturday morning prayer was dedicated to our dear Marie McLoughlin in honor of her 25th anniversary as an Associate of Wisdom. I was very touched by the tribute each one present gave to Marie, tributes which reflected the very spiritual, kind and generous person she is. It was certainly a time for celebration! (And when you are with the Associates there is NEVER a lack of ‘goodies’ to eat).

At this meeting I volunteered for the Communications Committee, to give a hand in organizing a second newsletter. Working with Audrey, Maryse and Sr. Peggy Kelleher was a very positive experience. At this time a lack of transportation has prevented me from attending the committee meetings.

In the fall of 2015 I was overjoyed when the Associates invited the Sisters from OLPH at Sound Beach to join them in a Day of Prayer at Star of the Sea on Saturday, November 7, 2015. We were quite a large group, 25 in all! The day began with a prayer service, followed by a presentation by Sr. Evelyn Eckhardt and Associate Pat Wolosz. There were times for reflection followed by small group sharing. These sessions gave us the opportunity to share our lives on a deeper spiritual and personal level. I enjoyed sharing with Bonnie Odiorne in such an intimate setting. The experience was most rewarding. The day closed with prayers and most appropriately, a hymn to Holy Wisdom by Associate, Sue O’Brien.
Laudato Si, Ecological Education and Spirituality

As we are spiritually fed by the beauty of our Mother Earth, so we must be ever vigilant in caring for Her.

As children we see clearly the glory of God in a beautiful array of colors: mountains, seas, and forests. Our parents taught us nature is God's gift to us. We must however, reintroduce the issue of caring for and replenishing this awe inspiring beauty. The children of our society today are not seeing much but a screen of ‘virtual reality.’

Over the years, ‘need’ has become an overused word representing the desire for disposable goods and our purchasing too many of these ‘throw away’ items. Did we get a new TV as children every time a new, more expensive TV was produced? No, we held onto the one ‘family’ TV until it was no longer repairable. Are our attitudes ‘repairable’ in relation to waste, pollution and disruption of our atmosphere as we burn garbage so we can make room for more things that often keep many in debt?

Bankruptcy occurs, all too often, because consumers, business owners and large corporations misuse money, over-extend either by coercion by big banks to borrow more than can be paid back or peer pressure. What an unethical if not fraudulent Big Money lure to attract the middle and lower income families to assure them a place in a perceived ethos of ‘ownership’ of things.

We lead by example. In our Politically Correct era at least we can teach economic realities to our school children, to wit, "Don’t Spend More Than You Earn", and even saving the smallest amount of income for the future.

Let us endeavor to live the joy of our natural world and put this great gift to use from when we first arise each morning, whether on vacation, playing with our children outside or just looking out a car window while traveling. We can ask our children, "What would life be like with no trees, flowers, lakes and oceans too dirty to swim in?" We are meant to be lovers of the earth, using her gifts responsibly, replenishing what we use and, most of all, being grateful for our treasure, Mother Earth.
by Maryse Haig, AW

My impressions on the fourth point of Pope Francis’ Laudato Si Integral Ecology

What I want to share after reading Pope Francis’s encyclical is not just the way it has made an impact on my life, but above all how it has compelled me to change it in the right direction.

Most of these principles were already applied in my day to day life for many years due to the formation I received at home, school and various catholic movements, such as Girl Scouts and Associates of Wisdom, which I still belong to. In addition, working closely with the Daughters of Wisdom in the JPIC Ministry for several years now has also allowed me to think and act differently.

What’s new now is that my spiritual life changes my attitude and convictions, motivates me to be more compassionate concerning the protection of the world. My eyes have been opened to greater horizons... I can see that we are all connected... Whatever happens in a small part of the world also affects the rest of the universe. For me, each new day starts with a simple act of gratitude, thanking God for being alive and able to admire His beautiful creatures, and comforting someone handicapped due to illness or loneliness. Everyone deserves the same respect regardless of social position and condition.

In addition, all the years spent in the US have been an opportunity for me to reaffirm my convictions, not to let myself be influenced by the lifestyle of others around me (family, friends and co-workers). “I made the choice to live simply, so others could simply live.”

Although constantly bombarded by media advertising, I always think first how someone less fortunate could benefit from my experience, involvement and talents. I also try to stay away from consumerism as much as possible.
MY JOURNEY WITH THE DAUGHTERS OF WISDOM . . .

By Amy Adams, AW

My first taste of Montfortian Spirituality was served to me by the Fathers at Montfort House and at the Lourdes Shrine in Litchfield, Connecticut during the Summer of 1997. I found comfort in their spirituality and ministering to the pilgrims that walked through the stone arch flanked on one side by St. Michael the Archangel and the other by St. Louis de Montfort. As I continued on my "walk" at the Shrine, I was drawn to learn more.

My friend, Susan, was preparing to become an Associate of Wisdom with the Daughters of Wisdom, and I can remember her expressing her zeal in her journey with me at her son's birthday party. At the time, I was embracing my daughter's engagement and my younger daughter's graduation from college. But I listened, and I said, "Maybe some day this could be me."

The next few years my journey included the "three amigos" at the Lourdes Shrine: Father Gene, Father Don, and Father Tom. I would bring my mom and dad to the masses in the summer out in the Grotto, and mom loved the way Father Tom would swing to and fro in his garments and his ‘long’ hair. My mom was fond of Father Tom, even into her first stages of dementia. I, too, became spellbound, and found my faith was transforming into a new and uncharted place. I wanted to become an Associate of Wisdom too! I found a brochure at Montfort House, and unbeknownst to me, when I grabbed it, I didn't realize it was an ‘invitation’ for religious life, for intended Daughters of Wisdom, also known as Nuns, to me. When I called the number, the sister on the other end of the phone was kind, and full of mirth as well! In her joy, she transferred me to Sister Peg Kelliher, who welcomed me into the Associates of Wisdom discernment process.

I walked the journey with Sister Peg and Sister Pat Torre in Southbury to become an Associate of Wisdom, proclaiming my promises on May 23, 2010, in the Chapel of Montfort House, surrounded by my family.

My life has been blessed by the love of the Daughters of Wisdom, as they became my family in life, and in death, when my mom passed away, giving me love and support when I was lost. And most recently, when my father went to his eternal rest to join my mother, they attended his funeral mass, and were there for me.

I have taken part in many retreats at Wisdom House, which has been a touchstone for me, and I have renewed my promises, contemplating the spirituality of Louis de Montfort.

Now, as I turn to the next page of my life, my blood family has gone ‘home,’ and my
GROWING TOWARD WISDOM IN CONTEMPLATION AND ACTION, continued

living family has dispersed throughout the country. I remain with the Montforts. This is a paradox, as the Montforts don't always stick around! They have to get up and go. This is their ministry. That's ok. I will stay back, and live my promises, upholding the beautiful spirituality.

I am confident, and rejoice in gratitude as I have upheld my promises in the prayers and deeds I give to my family, friends, and acquaintances. As I go forward I plan to extend myself to the elderly. That is my mission now. I am walking it, and I will follow it with joy and hope in the promises of Montfortian Spirituality.

GROWING TOWARD WISDOM IN CONTEMPLATION AND ACTION, continued

community to grow to meet the seriousness of climate change that is intensifying beyond any predictive models, as well as the ways in which our illusions are being stripped away regarding institutions. We need spiritual stamina to live in desperate political and economic times. If ever the world needed Wisdom, Sisters and Associates working together to pass on our dual charism, action and contemplation, it is now.

Wisdom shouts in the streets./She cries out in the public square./She calls to the crowds along the main street,/to those gathered in front of the city gate… (Proverbs 1:20-21)

I pray we find ways in our own paths, individually and corporately, to hear and respond to Her call.
A MESSAGE FROM THE ASSOCIATE COMMITTEE, continued

It was decided that staggering terms was not a good idea and so a new proposal began to take shape. The ACT terms of leadership will be changed as will the wording as to how many times one can be re-selected. The team is working on the new proposal and will send it to all Associates in September. The changes will be discussed at our business meeting at Star of the Sea in October.

We have been asked by Catherine McWilliams, the Province Communications Director, to send vignettes about ourselves, our work or anything of interest to both DWs and AWs as a short piece for our page on the website. It would be a great way to learn more about each other. Pictures are welcome too. More information will be forthcoming.

Dates to remember:
Wisdom Spirituality Sessions: in New York on May 5-6; in Connecticut on June 3-4
Jubilee August 20
Star of the Sea October 22-24.

Enjoy the spring and summer. Look forward to seeing you soon.

Wisdom’s Blessings,

Ellie, Pat, Valerie, Pat S