

**Transformative Education:  
A Work of Justice, a Work of Love  
Kathleen Hughes RSCJ  
Taipei, Taiwan  
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**Introduction**

Thank you for inviting me to be with you as we reflect together about the sublime work which binds us one with another across the world. We gather as educators who share a common mission: to make known the love of God through the service of education. We gather in the conviction that our internationality is both a gift and a responsibility. We gather to explore how the Society of the Sacred Heart's priority for justice, peace and the integrity of creation might serve more deliberately as a lens for discernment and decision-making in our institutions as well as in our own lives.

As I begin, I invite you into a dialogue with me on the theme of transformative education. I believe each one of you has reflected deeply about the demands of education in the twenty-first century. You have considered trends affecting education, and the demands of global citizenship; you have faced the challenges of technology in and out of the classroom; you have pondered the competencies of mind and heart needed in today's faculty and staff. What I hope to bring to the dialogue is the perspective of the Society of the Sacred Heart, the vision of Madeleine Sophie Barat, the rigor of Janet Erskine Stuart, the best thinking which has surfaced from our recent general chapters and other international Society commissions. These are perspectives which few of you may be able to access.

Let's think of this, then, as a partnership as we move forward.

## Overview

Here's a road map for this morning's presentation. I will set the stage for our conversation by speaking briefly about our present context and then showing a short video clip of some of the most telling facts of our rapidly changing reality. Afterwards I'll invite you to imagine which of these trends and facts most challenge our styles of teaching and learning.

Then I will consider, in turn: the child we educate; the curriculum we offer; the formation of the educator; and the goal of education. I have adopted this structure, inspired by a conference given in 1898 by Janet Erskine Stuart to the faculty of Maryville University in St. Louis Missouri.<sup>1</sup> Of course, all things "Janet Stuart" are now of heightened interest as we prepare to celebrate the centenary of her death in 2014. Janet Erskine Stuart is arguably the greatest educator in a religious community blessed with great educators. Stuart suggested that we can describe the event of education through metaphysical causality: the material cause is the child, beloved of God and given a mission in the world that only she or he can fulfill; the formal cause is the subject matter made up of the necessary, the eminently useful, and the beautiful in about equal measure; the efficient cause is the educator who must possess certain qualities of mind and heart in order to fulfill this role; and the final cause is to raise children to God and to teach them to reach their last end. I will attempt to reimagine and rearticulate Janet Stuart's categories for today, hoping to be faithful to her core thought.

In conclusion, I will simply pose a few "so what?" questions. Our international network of schools is a great gift and a great responsibility. It has amazing possibilities. How can we maximize the potential which is ours? What might we do better together than we can accomplish

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<sup>1</sup> Janet Erskine Stuart, *Conferences on Education Given at Maryville, 1898*. Rome: International Archives of the Society of the Sacred Heart. See, also, "Views on Education," in *Janet Erskine Stuart: A Short Biography* by Pauline Smith-Steinmetz (Dublin: Clonmore and Reynolds Ltd., 1948) 58-68.

alone? I will try to prime the pump for that conversation to continue throughout the rest of our meeting.

We will take a coffee break about half way through the morning, and at the conclusion of my talk, four of you have graciously agreed to offer a few reflections on our topic before we open this up for general conversation. Tomorrow there will be a slot of time at 14:00 for small group discussion on a few questions I have formulated, or you may want to form groups spontaneously around other topics.

## **CONTEXT**

Before introducing the video clip, I'd like to set the stage for this talk by recalling our recent history.

The Society of the Sacred Heart celebrated its bicentennial in the year 2,000 with a gathering of delegates from all over the world. They assembled in Amiens, France, the place Sophie called the "berceau" or "cradle" of the Society, for it was in Amiens, in 1801, that the educational mission of the Society began. To commemorate the bicentennial, the theme of Chapter 2000 was "Our educational mission: a pathway to discover, a space to announce, the love of the Heart of Jesus."

In the same year, a few months prior to the opening of the Society's General Chapter, eighty nine Heads of Sacred Heart Schools, many of you among them, chose to gather in Joigny, France, the birthplace of Madeleine Sophie Barat. I was the first international gathering of this body. You came together because you were conscious of your unique relationship to the Society of the Sacred Heart and your responsibility for keeping Sophie's charism alive in the schools entrusted to your care. You were also seeking a genuinely mutual relationship with the Society

and you addressed a variety of proposals to the General Chapter, most of them largely unrealized to this day but well worth revisiting in the course of this meeting.<sup>2</sup>

Besides these two important meetings, the year 2000 has another significance for us. Thomas Friedman identified the year 2000 as the beginning of the third era of globalization. According to Friedman, globalization began in 1492 and continued until about 1800. This first era of globalization was built primarily around countries globalizing: Spain colonizing America, Great Britain colonizing India, and Portugal in the East Indies and East Asia. During this period the world shrank from a size large to a size medium.

The second era of globalization extends from about 1800 until the year 2000; during this time the world shrank from a size medium to a size small. This second era of globalization was built around companies as dynamic agents, globalizing for markets and for labor.

And just at the turn of the millennium we entered the third era, shrinking the world from a size small to a size tiny, and leveling and flattening the playing field at the same time. What is unique about this third era is that it is not built around countries, and it is not built around companies. It is built around individuals. The new "new" thing about this era of globalization is that the dynamic agent is the individual and the small group, and they are not just white Western individuals but people from around the globe and of all colors of the rainbow.<sup>3</sup>

We were not unaware of globalization in 2000. That was the topic of the General Chapter keynote address. Sister Mely Vasquez, an RSCJ theologian from the Philippines, launched the dialogue and what she said remains true today. There is an infinity of issues vying for our attention and response, she noted,

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. "Proposals from the International Heads of Schools meeting to the General Chapter of the Society of the Sacred Heart." Joigny, 29 April 2000. The General Chapter responded to the Directors of the Schools of the Sacred Heart by letter dated 21 August 2000.

<sup>3</sup> "Globalization," Thomas Friedman. Address to the Carnegie Council, April 6, 2005. Cf. also Friedman's *The World is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-first Century*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005.

...but the over-arching phenomenon that comprises the context of all of us today, which must be the framework of all our endeavors, whether we are aware of it or not, is globalization. None of our countries or regions is untouched by it. It has changed the landscape of our lives through: shrinking space, shrinking time, and disappearing borders. ...As [...] educators, we are challenged to grapple with the issues of justice and cultures in a globalized world. Because of the vast spread of the impact of globalization worldwide, institutions must seriously ponder its dynamics as they formulate their vision, goals and strategies if they are to remain vital and relevant to the world community.<sup>4</sup>

Following Mely's talk, the chapter delegates identified some of the challenges posed by globalization to our work of transformative education, for example:

- the longing of millions of people to have access to the benefits of education;
- the desire of peoples and cultures that their identity and their right to belong to the global community be recognized;
- the astounding speed of technological change, which impacts on educational change in an uneven way;
- the struggle of women for equality in relationships in society and the Church;
- and the relativizing of what is of permanent human and spiritual value.<sup>5</sup>

Our reflections, which sound like an echo of the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals, actually anticipated their articulation and dissemination by several months.

Clearly globalization remains a great challenge with which we must continue to grapple as educators. The information explosion is another.

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<sup>4</sup> Sister Amelia Vasquez RSCJ, "The Society of the Sacred Heart in a Globalized World." Address to the General Chapter of the Society of the Sacred Heart, July 26, 2000, Amiens, France.

<sup>5</sup> Society of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, General Chapter, 2000, Amiens, France 12-July – 20 August, p. 21 English.

Let's consider this video clip, "Did You Know 2011," a great, eye-opening video on YouTube, particularly on the explosion of information technology.<sup>6</sup> Some of it is particular to the United States, but much of it applies worldwide. As you watch, be aware of what strikes you as especially pertinent to our work of transformative education. What are those developments, digital and otherwise, to which we must pay attention?

Video clip – first showing

Elicit responses from participant; plus what's not yet been named as our context?

Video clip – decide whether to show a second time...

## **The Child**

So that's the context and those are some of the challenges before us. Now let's move on to Janet Erskine Stuart's framework of the metaphysical causality of education and look first at what she called "the material cause of education," the child.

I am using the word "child" deliberately because *child* is the word used almost without exception by both Madeleine Sophie Barat and Janet Erskine Stuart when speaking of the young people in the school, not the word *pupil* or *student*. These latter terms suggest that education has to do with the relationship between a teacher and a student which takes place in a classroom or lab and is primarily intellectual. For Sophie and Janet the term "child" captured the whole of the person – mind, body and spirit. It also suggested a way of thinking about the quality of the relationship between the child and the one who would educate. Sophie once said: "What is needed for winning [...] children is to be busy about them, to be at their service, to listen to them with interest, to console and to encourage them....to become for their sakes gentle, patient, indulgent, in one word, a mother." I'll come back to this provocative maternal image when we

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<sup>6</sup> Did You Know, 2011, researched by Karl Fisch, Scott McLeod, and Jeff Brenman.

look at the qualities and skills needed in faculty and staff.

So, who are the children today in our classrooms? Here's a composite picture. In order to make a few generalizations, I have narrowed this category to those of secondary school age and immediately beyond. First of all, youth are increasingly members of a single youth culture: There is a common culture which is reaching beyond language, nationality, and religion. It is reaching the electronically connected faster, of course, but TV and film are also bearers of the youth culture identity.

To speak today of a global youth culture suggest that young people in India have more in common with young people from New Zealand than with their own parents. Due to the influence of media, the internet, technology, and increased travel, there are common ways of being and living, a common sharing of information and ideas. There are common styles of music and clothing, common media interests, dance, and material possessions. This population of the young and web savvy has grown into the hundreds of millions. And speaking of web savvy, youth have left their parents and teachers behind. We call them digital natives. They know the language and the grammar of this new land. The rest of us are more like immigrants in a foreign country, speaking, at best, with a thick accent. It's an interesting role reversal to consider.

Among youth, there is developing a common value system: friends are more important than family though some have friends they have never met face to face; respect for authority has to be earned; relationships are everything though casual relationships and casual sex abound.

In terms of faith, youth today are highly selective. Few believe everything in the religion of their parents; rather they edit for their own reality, sometimes slicing and dicing a pastiche of elements from several religions. But here is an interesting fact: the films that attract the young worldwide are filled with ritual and mystery. Among the top grossing films of all time in this

age category are Avatar, Harry Potter, Star Wars, Jurassic Park, and the Lord of the Rings. What are we to make of this? Clearly young people are drawn to the realm of the spiritual.

There was an excellent study three years ago that bore this out. It was entitled “A Global Exploration of How Today’s Young People Experience and Think About Spiritual Development.”<sup>7</sup> Six thousand five hundred young people from eight countries<sup>8</sup> were part of focus groups, surveys and in-depth interviews, and these are some of the study’s key findings: The vast majority of respondents say there is a spiritual dimension to life and a third claim they are very spiritual. Most report their spirituality has increased in the last several years largely because of family and friends. They see religion and spirituality differently but have a positive attitude towards both. They claim that everyday experiences and relationships are nourishing; they report that activities in solitude such as spending time in nature (87%), listening to or playing music (82%), being alone in a quiet place (74%) make it easier to find meaning, peace and joy, and activities in service to others, for example, spending time helping other people or the community, giving money to those in need, or showing love, compassion or humility nurture their spiritual development.

Certainly, many young people have a passion for justice and a concern for the future of the planet; many, too, want to give their lives generously in service to others and to make a difference in the world.<sup>9</sup> Though they might not call it this, they experience in their bones a mission, a call to make a difference in the world. They know they have a mission which only they can fulfill.

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<sup>7</sup> Cf. *With Their Own Voices*, a Research Study from Search Institute’s Center for Spiritual Development in Childhood and Adolescence. Minneapolis, MN. 2008.

<sup>8</sup> Australia, Cameroon, Canada, India, Thailand, Ukraine, United Kingdom, and the United States.

<sup>9</sup> Chapter 2008, “Our Priority for Young People.” Eng. 30-32.

The question is how to harness all this energy, how to educate their minds and their hearts to be themselves transformed, and to choose to participate in the transformation of society.

## **Content**

Let's turn now to Janet Stuart's formal cause of education, namely, the subject matter "...made up of the necessary, the eminently useful, and the beautiful in about equal measure."

Nearly from the first days of the Society of the Sacred Heart, there was a Plan of Studies which expressed the content, method and spirit of the curriculum. The first such plan, implemented in 1805, breathed the same spirit as the Ratio Studiorum of the Society of Jesus, a not unlikely event since founding RSCJ were in close contact with learned Jesuit schoolmasters. But while our Plan of Studies adopted and assimilated Ignatian spirituality and pedagogy, Sophie's Plan was "...more open-ended and flexible: a liberal arts education with theology at its core; structured on philosophy, literature and history, and humanistic in its content, with an integration of sciences and practical skills.<sup>10</sup> Reflecting Sophie's more feminine design, pupils were also taught drawing, needlework, instrumental music, and singing.

In planning her curriculum thus, Sophie demonstrated her willingness to revise her curriculum beyond the then rigidity of the Jesuit model which did not satisfy her. According to Margaret Williams, "The great value of her educational plan, during a time when young women were so poorly educated, was not so much the content of her curriculum but the quality of it and her insistence on a pedagogy that stressed strong character formation."<sup>11</sup> I can only assume Sophie would delight in the conversations and the growing body of literature today on the topic

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<sup>10</sup> Rosemary A. DeJulio, "Women's Ways of knowing and Learning: The Response of Mary Ward and Madeleine Sophie Barat to the *Ratio Studiorum*," In *The Jesuit Ratio Studiorum: 400<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Perspectives*, ed. Vincent J. Duminuco., 121-122.

<sup>11</sup> Margaret Williams, *RSCJ, The Society of the Sacred Heart* (London: Dartman, Longman and Todd, 1978, 71.

of character formation and the particular qualities young people need to develop for a whole and human life such as wisdom, courage, humanity, justice, temperance and transcendence.<sup>12</sup>

Over the next one hundred and fifty years the Plan of Studies went through ten revisions, each time ensuring a uniform curriculum across the Society's rapidly growing international reach, but by the mid-nineteen fifty's, uniformity was no longer possible nor desirable. The Plan of Studies was replaced by The Spirit and Plan of Studies which proposed that from henceforth a common mission and a common spirit would bind us together, and that shared principles and values, broad purposes, hopes and ambitions would bind us as one.<sup>13</sup>

While it remains true that a common syllabus is no longer desirable or viable, still given the pressures of our age, perhaps today we might consider helping each other formulate and adopt common competencies that will help us meet the challenges of globalization and technology for the foreseeable future.

A Harvard University education professor by the name of Fernando Reimers, a Venezuelan I believe, offers the following definition of global competence:

...the knowledge and skills that help people understand the flat world in which they live, the skills to integrate across disciplinary domains to comprehend global affairs and events and to create possibilities to address them. Global competencies are also the attitudinal and ethical dispositions that make it possible to interact peacefully, respectfully, and productively with fellow human beings from diverse geographies.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> See, for example, the recent article in the New York Times, Paul Tough, "What if the Secret to Success is Failure?" September 14, 2011; see also the scholarly work by Martin Seligman and Christopher Peterson, Character Formation and Virtues: A Handbook and Classifications (New York: Oxford Press, 2004).

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Preamble to the 1975 Goals and Criteria for Sacred Heart Schools in the United States.

<sup>14</sup> Fernando Reimers, "Educating for Global Competency. In J. E. Cohen and M. B. Malin (Eds.), International Perspectives on the Goals of Universal Basic and Secondary Education. New York: Routledge Press, 2009.

Happily, a Chinese educator by the name of Yong Zhao, picked up on Reimers's definition of global competence and separated it into three important dimensions: the affective dimension, the action dimension, and the academic dimension:

\*The affective dimension, also called the ethical dimension, refers to a positive disposition towards cultural difference and a framework of global values to engage difference.

\*The action dimension, also called the skill dimension, refers primarily to the ability to speak, understand and think in a foreign language.

\*The academic dimension has to do with knowledge of the world, hence is also referred to as the disciplinary and interdisciplinary dimension, which includes deep knowledge and understanding of world history, geography, the global dimension of topics such as health, climate, and economics, and the process of globalization itself.<sup>15</sup>

Zhao mentions a few other definitions of global competence, but claims that what is consistent in each is the underlying emphasis on “the other.” As he notes, “...technology, trade and immigration have led to the ‘death of distance.’ People previously separated from us by distance have been brought into our lives, and how to view, interact with, and live with them has become a significant issue facing all of us, thus forming the foundation of our ability to live in the global world.”<sup>16</sup>

Zhao also provides a model of digital competence which includes four broad categories: knowledge of the nature of the virtual world; a positive attitude towards the digital world; the ability to use different tools to participate and lead in the virtual world; and the ability to create products for the virtual world. According to Yong Zhao, “As the virtual world further expands,

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<sup>15</sup> Yong Zhao, *Catching Up or Leading the Way*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2009. P. 166.

<sup>16</sup> Op. cit.

we need our children to become digitally competent so they can live safely and productively in this newly emerging world.”<sup>17</sup>

There are so many competing forces in shaping your curricula. These global and digital competency dimensions may prove to be a very helpful lens in sorting out, for today and for the future, what is necessary, what is eminently useful and what is beautiful.

Even more importantly, the increased focus on “the other,” the building of relationships, the bridging of differences, may invite a closer look at how we talk about community in our schools, how we build it day by day, and what virtues, for example, respect, compassion, forgiveness, and generosity, we hope to model ourselves and to instill in those we serve.

## **The Educator**

We come now to Janet Stuart’s efficient cause of education – the person of the educator. I use the term “educator” advisedly, rather than teacher, because I want to include every adult in each of our communities, whether in or out of the classroom, or in the business office or lunch room or caring for the grounds or promoting equity and justice or performing any of the numerous other support services needed for the smooth functioning of a school community. How we relate to one another, how we create a community where everyone can flourish, how we communicate with respect and kindness, make decisions for the common good, act with justice...all of it is part of being a Sacred Heart educator, no matter our role. Every single person in the adult community is part of the transformative educational experience of the students entrusted to us.

Two interwoven qualities were equally important for Sophie in the person of a Sacred Heart educator. In one of her letters she wrote: “The Society has need of *saintes savantes*; you must become one.” She was looking for educators who were “wise saints” or “holy scholars.”

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<sup>17</sup> Yong Zhao, op cit., 179-180.

Both are fitting translations of her thought. In our context she was looking for two characteristics: wise and well-trained professionals, whatever our particular role in the institution, and men and women who care deeply about our own spiritual formation and our life with God. In a word, Sophie wanted companions who would carry out her educational vision to be persons of professional competence and persons committed to the holy life.

Let's look at this two-fold vocation. First, professional competence: Sophie demanded professional excellence of her companions. She had a passion for the intellectual preparation of competent and well-trained educators in whatever professional capacity they served. That Sophie's vision of education was broad, deep and demanding is no surprise, given her own extraordinary education. For her, education was of the whole person, body, mind and spirit and thus it must encompass a rigorous intellectual formation, a concern for the other, especially the disadvantaged, a strong instinct for community, character formation in freedom, and above all, a deep and abiding life of faith.

Together with Josephine Goetz who would follow her as Superior General in the Society of the Sacred Heart, Sophie developed a program of study called the Juniorate – in effect a teacher training program – whose goal was described this way by one who went through it: “to make sure that our teaching would preserve its progressiveness, its cultured breadth, its lofty scope, while losing nothing of its orthodoxy or its beautiful uniformity and, concurrently, being perfectly suited to the times.” Every woman who was destined for the classroom first attended the Juniorate to be trained rigorously in the art and craft of education and in the particular discipline she would teach. The Juniorate also served to identify those who should be counseled out of the classroom and into other modes of service.

Professional competence, however, is not enough. A Sacred Heart educator must also be committed to his or her own inner journey into God. We may use words like integrity or authenticity or self-transcendence; we may be striving for mindfulness or hoping for transformation. We may not be comfortable using words at all but just have a felt sense of something greater than ourselves drawing us to live a more human and balanced life. All of the ingredients of the holy life are there in our deepest desires and only require of us three things: that we learn to pay attention; that we identify the deepest hungers of our hearts as spiritual longings; and that we open ourselves more fully to the divine.

And in this context I want to reach back to Sophie's desire that the educator be a "mother" to the children. I want to translate that image today as a vocation to spiritual life giving. Such generativity happens because of qualities personally appropriated by the educator and lived unselfconsciously. And it happens too because of the atmosphere which radiates from them on their environment and the works which they produce in common with others which engender a vital spirit and communicate hope, that most urgently needed virtue in our day.

How does all this happen? How does one become a sainte savante? How does one develop one's spiritual generativity? What do you look for when you hire a new employee? What formation to mission opportunities do you build into the school year? How does the spirit, mission and educational vision of Sophie and her followers become available to faculty and staff, administration and trustees? What opportunities do you offer so that it can be appropriated over time. Eleven years ago, when the International Heads of School wrote to the General Chapter you and your colleagues named the process of formation to mission as "crucial to ensure the vitality of the Society's mission." You presumed, rightly I think, that schools and provinces had to work in tandem to ensure these ends. Have you been satisfied by the collaboration you have

experienced in the last eleven years? What models of formation have proved helpful? What more must be done?<sup>18</sup>

## **The End of Education**

We come to the final cause, the end of education.

Perhaps you have been wondering if I would ever get around to justice, peace and the integrity of creation. But I believe we have been looking at these realities throughout this talk. Isn't education itself an act of justice? Isn't education a foundation for peace? Doesn't education instill in us a new spiritual vision of the universe and our place within it? Isn't the end of education, in reality, the establishment of the reign of God?

Our most recent General Chapter in Peru in 2008 spoke eloquently of justice, peace and the integrity of creation. Chapter 2008 exhorted us to find ways to be touched by the poverty, inequality, exclusion, violence, and environmental destruction that are present in today's world. It urged us "...to take responsibility to orient all our educative endeavors towards creating relationships of equality, inclusion, non-violence, and harmony, believing that to have life, and life in abundance, is the deepest desire of God." It also lifted up the daily efforts of men and women in search of a better world and it stated that "...with them, strengthened by the Spirit, we want to continue finding the face of God in the future towards which we journey."<sup>19</sup>

I want to focus attention particularly on the concept, "the integrity of creation," which I believe rightly understood, includes justice and peace within its purview. The broad category of the integrity of creation, of course, embraces scores of particular issues which have captured our imagination and our passion in these recent years: global warming and climate science, water use, renewable energy, ecology, conservation, species preservation, sustainability, waste

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<sup>18</sup> Cf. Proposals From the International Heads of Schools Meeting to the General Chapter of the Society of the Sacred Heart. Letter dated 29 April 2000.

<sup>19</sup> Society of the Sacred Heart, General Chapter 2008. Eng. P. 28

management, and in general, caring for our environment and recognizing our interdependent presence within the world. These are particular and pressing issues of our day. But they will matter more to us to the extent that we enter into a new narrative, a narrative referred to by writers on the subject as “the universe story.”

Simply put, the universe story unites science, the humanities, and the Christian story in a dramatic exploration of the unfolding of the universe, our evolving place in the cosmos, and the boundless possibilities for our future. The universe story admits of no separation between humanity and the creative universe that brought us into being. It postulates a critical realization that the earth and its peoples are inseparable. We are bound together, one with another. What we do affects the force field, or the energy field, around each of us for good or ill. Making consistent, conscious choices for good contributes to the transformation of the whole.

Inspired by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, the brilliant writings of people like Brian Swimme, Mary Evelyln Tucker and Thomas Berry, have made the new cosmology more accessible to people like ourselves.<sup>20</sup> More recently, a book by Judy Cannato has captured my imagination because she sounds to me like a Sacred Heart educator. Her book is entitled *Field of Compassion: How the New Science is Transforming Spiritual Life*,<sup>21</sup> and she too has a gift for making a very complex subject understandable.

This is the heart of her thesis: The universe story is one of cosmogenesis, a single creative event from which all life has emerged. The Christian story is one of connectedness as well. The creation event is interpreted as a single act of divine grace that is integral to the world as a whole, climaxing in a profound experience of unity in the Incarnation, for in the Incarnation

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<sup>20</sup> Cf. Brian Swimme and Mary Evelyn Tucker, *Journey of the Universe: An Epic Story of Cosmic, Earth and Human Transformation*; Brian Swimme and Thomas Berry, *The Universe Story*.

<sup>21</sup> Judy Cannato, *Field of Compassion: How the New Cosmology is Transforming Spiritual Life* (Notre Dame: Sorin Books, 2010) p. 153.

divine revelation and human acceptance merge. Within the Christian story the image of the kingdom of God proposes that the connectedness at the heart of all creation be lived out tangibly, in the here and now, in the quality of relationships around us.

Each of us has a role and bears a responsibility for the continuing unfolding of the universe. We are called to be co-creators with God. Isn't that what we imply when we speak of our work of education as "...a participation in God's work of transformation," one of the key insights of Chapter 2000? Further, our engagement in transformative education must be marked by the quality of compassion in order that we might mirror God's work of compassionate action in all of creation. In Cannato's words:

Compassion changes everything. Compassion heals. Compassion mends the broken and restores what has been lost. Compassion draws together those who have been estranged or never even dreamed they were connected. Compassion pulls us out of ourselves and into the heart of another, placing us on holy ground where we instinctively take off our shoes and walk in reverence. Compassion springs out of vulnerability and triumphs in unity.<sup>22</sup>

I believe that for us, members of the family of God's Heart, "compassion" is both a quality and a perfect organizing principle for the way forward. As Chapter 2008 declared: "From our contemplation of the pierced Heart of Jesus in the heart of wounded humanity flows the desire to commit ourselves with greater passion and compassion to justice, peace, and the integrity of creation."<sup>23</sup>

Compassion is the character trait above all others that we need to instill in our young people and foster in ourselves. Compassion is the overarching "competency" as

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<sup>22</sup> Op. cit., p.8.

<sup>23</sup> Op. cit., p. 28.

we face the challenges of globalization. Compassion leads us to consider how our international network of schools can be good news for the poor. Compassion dictates our choices and undergirds our hopes for the future of this network and, indeed, for the future of this planet.

## **Panel of Respondents**

**Maureen Ryan, AUS**

**Chris Carpenter, UK**

**Kim Sook Hee, KOR**

**Suzanne Cooke, USA**

## **Conversation**

### **End of Morning Session: Identify questions for small groups tomorrow...**

1. What strategies have you developed for the formation of the adult community as saints savants? What personal and professional development do you offer? What help do you look for from the Society?
2. Yong Zhao has proposed three dimensions of global competency: the affective or ethical dimension, the action dimension, and the academic dimension. Is this template helpful in your situation? Would you add anything to his categories?
3. How is our international network of schools “good news for the poor”? In 2000 you stated: “We wish to live as “Good News” for the poorest, and to this end we commit ourselves, in our educational institutions to seeks together the implementation of projects

for solidarity, communion, and education for peace.” Do you have further insight about what that might look like?

4. What can we do better together than alone and what formal structure will make that happen?
5. Can you imagine the possibility that each of our institutions might forge a bond with one of the Society’s works of popular education for our mutual enlightenment and enrichment?

**So What?** We draw to a close. This is the Fourth Meeting of the Heads of Schools of the Sacred Heart. I have spoken to some of you about past meetings, about interesting conversations you have had, about proposals you have formulated and dreams you have shared.

I wondered if your proposals (collaboration, new language, support for formal education, formation, internationality and the web site) to the General Chapter in 2000 were premature. I wondered if there was not enough clarity about what a more formal organization might realize for all of you. I wonder now whether it is time to create some more formal structure to continue the momentum between meetings.

Here are some particular questions to consider in this precious time we have together:

How can we best be in reciprocal relationship with one another, and also with works of popular education around the globe? What can we do better together than alone? How can we share insights and resources with ease? How can technology assist us to establish and maintain connectedness, offer online courses and blended programs of study, use skype for occasional formation to mission input?

What ever happened to the web site proposed in 2000? Could we establish our own “cloud” for the exchange of ideas and resources?

Why did the Sophia Commission falter after only a few years? What can we learn and thus avoid as we attempt to establish a long-term structure?

How can we take advantage of some of the links already established across the Sacred Heart network, e.g. the Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation Commission?

Should there be regular meetings of Directors of networks including, from those provinces without a Director, the member of the Provincial Team assigned to education?

Given the great differences among us in size, resources, personnel, how can we assure genuine mutuality, everyone giving and everyone receiving in reciprocity?

How do we see an organizational link with the central administration in Rome?