



# JUST Love



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE OFFICE OF PEACE, JUSTICE AND  
ECOLOGICAL INTEGRITY OF THE SISTERS OF CHARITY OF SAINT ELIZABETH

## HOW SHALL WE EMERGE? CHRISTOPHER J. DOUCOT

With the pandemic and ensuing worldwide quarantine we are living in a time when it feels as if time itself has been suspended. The world we knew has passed but is not gone. The world we knew lives in our memories and our shared stories. It is also lived in our lives. The ways in which we shaped the old world through our laws, values, institutions, and systems is reflected in the contours of our lives.

Who lives in a house, who rents an apartment, who sleeps in a shelter, and who is imprisoned? Who has a new car? Who has a jalopy? Who takes the bus? And who walks? Who is paid the minimum wage? Who lives off of under-taxed capital gains? Who will work 'til their last breath? And who will retire at 55?

The precarities and inequalities of the world we knew are suddenly visible to many in the world we now know. We learned that tens of millions of Americans were just one or two paychecks away from depending on miles long lines for food. Racist policies and systems that impoverish contribute to malnourishment, crowded living conditions, food deserts, suspicion of the medical system, and dreaded pre-existing conditions. Black people, Brown people, Navajo People, and elderly residents in nursing homes are infected by the virus like the rest of us but fewer are surviving. Their death certificates will list COVID-19 as the cause of death, but a more honest accounting might read "*Racism, aggravated by COVID-19*".

I say good riddance to the old world. Meanwhile, this time of quarantine is tenuous and transitional. Raham Emanuel has often said that "*a crisis should not be wasted*". He means that crises create openings for wide scale change. I suspect he is right, but I fear the change sought by the empowered will not reckon with the injustices they wrought. The suffering of our planet and our people will not be sufficiently met with change. Not even the nebulous Green New Deal would be sufficiently compassionate and restorative.

I would prefer to think that the world has become our cocoon and we are now pupating. The butterfly that emerges from a chrysalis in no way resembles the worm that was cocooned. This is not an exclusively biological process; it is also a holy mystery of emergent beauty.

When a caterpillar enters its cocoon it dissolves into an ooze which contain highly organized groups of cells known as imaginal



discs. From these discs will emerge wings, legs, eyes, and antennae. The caterpillar was never just a worm, it was always a butterfly in the process of becoming.

When a butterfly first unfolds its wings, in realization of its true being, it re-enters a world no longer bound by the laws of gravity- a measure of freedom unfathomable for a mere caterpillar.

I believe we are angels in the process of becoming. We were never just humans. The "imaginal discs" from which our wings will form is the Ru'ah, the breath God released into our parents' parents when they were formed from the dust of Creation. This breath, *this Holy Spirit*, is waiting for us to accept our destiny. If we are to emerge from where we are currently suspended as the profoundly beautiful creatures we are destined to be we need to do our part. We need not dissolve our bodies into ooze but we will need to dissolve ourselves of ugliness.

Greed is ugly. Hoarding is ugly. Systems of injustice are ugly. Hate and violence, rugged individualism, misogyny, and racism are ugly. Neglect is ugly.

Too much of the old world was ugly, but surviving the old world are the imaginal discs from which the new world will emerge you, your loved ones, strangers to you, and even your enemies. We are God's imaginal discs. When we empty ourselves of all that is ugly we open ourselves up to all that remains: beauty. This emptying, the divinity school kids call it kenosis, is not emptiness, it is the grace to see ourselves, and everyone else, as full of God.

This is the mystery of Jesus proclaiming the Kingdom of God despite the persistence of war and poverty. The Kingdom of God is simultaneously already and not yet, just like the times we now live in. This period of overlapping epochs, the holy eternal, and the profane temporal, is tenuous and transitional. If we want to be released from this quarantine between heaven and earth we need to do that

which is beautiful.

Sharing is beautiful. Cooperation and community are beautiful. Caring for those who are hungry or homeless, elderly, or odd is beautiful. Responding to the cries of the poor with a spirit of repentance, and a yearning for reparation, is beautiful. Liberation is beautiful. And all of God's children, Black and Brown, White, Asian, and indigenous are beautiful. If we are able to realize our true being we would no longer be bound by the laws of tycoons and buffoons- a measure of freedom unfathomable for mere humans.

Perhaps the most beautiful thing we can do is to sit with those who are suffering; to wipe their tears, hold them

close, and remind them that they are loved. Today you hold. Tomorrow you will be held. Transformed, unfettered no one will be alone, and none among us will be unloved. When we emerge as the beautiful beings of love we were always destined to be, we will no longer will we be suspended between times, between heaven and earth. The face of the earth will be renewed and we will have become the Beloved Community.

*Christopher J. Doucot, with his wife Jackie Allen and friend Brian Kavanaugh, is a founder of the Hartford Catholic Worker. Chris is a long-time activist for peace, justice, and dismantling of white privilege and is closest to God when fishing.*



### **An Affront Crying Out to Heaven: The Nuclear Arms Race**

August 6-9, 2020 is the 75th anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the United States resulting in the death of an estimated 80,000 people. The bombing also inaugurated the nuclear arms race which has diverted trillions of dollars to lethal weaponry that could have been spent on human needs. In his 2019 visit to Hiroshima, Pope Francis said, "In a world where millions of children and families live in inhumane conditions, the money that is squandered and the fortunes made through the manufacture, upgrading, maintenance and sale of ever more destructive weapons are an affront crying out to heaven." Here are some things you can

do to prevent nuclear war and oppose the nuclear arms race:

-Support the work of the **International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN)** [www.ican.org](http://www.ican.org). 81 countries have already signed the UN International Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Contact your elected officials for the USA to do the same.

- Participate in the **Don't Bank on the Bomb Campaign** and call on your financial institutions to boycott and divest from the 26 US companies doing business in the nuclear weapons industry [www.dontbankonthebomb.com](http://www.dontbankonthebomb.com)

- Join the **Back From the Brink Campaign** <https://www.preventnuclearwar.org/> that calls on the United States to lead a global effort to prevent nuclear war by:

\* renouncing the option of using nuclear weapons first; \* ending the sole, unchecked authority of any US president to launch a nuclear attack; \* taking US nuclear weapons off hair-trigger alert; \* cancelling the plan to replace the entire US nuclear arsenal with enhanced weapons; and \* actively pursuing a verifiable agreement among nuclear armed states to eliminate their nuclear arsenals.

## **JPIC Dates to Remember in August**

**2 Birthday of James Baldwin (1924)** "To be a Negro in this country and to be relatively conscious is to be in a rage almost all the time."

**6-9 US bombs Hiroshima and Nagasaki** "If we really want to build a more just and secure society, we must let the weapons fall from our hands. How can we propose peace if we constantly invoke the threat of nuclear war as a legitimate recourse for the resolution of conflicts? A true peace can only be an unarmed peace. Pope Francis

**15 Assumption of Mary** "My understanding of the Assumption has been transformed. I have become infinitely grateful for the Church's emphasis on the sanctity of the body, and Its insistence on the way that matter participates in our salvation. I have begun to internalize the mystery of

the holiness of material things, and am in awe at the gift we have been given as human beings to become co-creators with God" Brenna Cussen, Catholic Worker

**18 Birthday of Winona La Duke, Native American activist** "The essence of the problem is about consumption, recognizing that a society that consumes one-third of the world's resources is unsustainable. This level of consumption requires constant intervention into other people's lands. That's what's going on."

**26 Women's Equality Day** "I write for those women who do not speak, for those who do not have a voice because they were so terrified, because we are taught to respect fear more than ourselves. We've been taught that silence would save us, but it won't." Audre Lorde