

# *When You Care Enough to Send the Very Best*

*...a contemplative response*

## *Introduction:*

A man whose wife was shot randomly by a mass shooter and was concerned that no one would honor her life by coming to her funeral, finds himself overwhelmed when hundreds arrive.

Four little boys decide that they will together befriend an autistic classmate and include him in all of their activities, leaving his mother in tears of gratitude for their attentiveness and care.

A top-seeded tennis player saves a little boy from being crushed by other fans all seeking autographs, lifting him out of the crowd, wiping his tears and giving him not only an autograph, but his undivided attention.

*Who are these people who care enough to send their very best?  
Who or what grounds them and motivates them?  
Are such incidents more the exception than the norm these days?  
Or are they "us" the unsung heroes who simply go about life in an ordinary extraordinary way?*



## *Setting the Stage:*

More than 60 years after it was first used, the slogan "When You Care Enough to Send the Very Best" has become one of the most enduring advertising slogans in history. Created from writings of C.E. (Ed) Goodman, a former Hallmark sales vice president, the statement is more than a slogan for Hallmark, it is a business commitment. This familiar tag line for Hallmark products was probably never intended to be the focus for a contemplative reflection piece for LCWR leaders and congregations, and yet is this not what each of us is about? Is this not the very message and meaning of the Incarnation...a loving God caring enough to send the very best?



## *Reading/personal reflection:*

If you haven't yet discovered Maria Shriver's *Sunday Paper* on line, you might want to give it a try. In a recent edition, she shares what resulted from taking some time off from work, social media, and endless commitments. Added to this was the experience of her niece committing suicide. As she engages in it all, she finds meaning in creating a new narrative about herself.



As I slowed down, I noticed **sparks of joy** emerge inside of me. I felt the joy of not being rushed. I felt the joy of being disconnected from social media. My anxiety slowly gave way to a **new tempo**, one that felt peaceful and calm. You see, we can all walk around seemingly alive but feel dead on the inside. We're all running around doing **things that bring us no joy or meaning**. We stay in jobs, relationships, or situations well past when we should, incorrectly believing that life doesn't have more in store for us.

In quieting down, though, I came to realize that everything is in flux. **Death and rebirth** are everywhere. They are all the more reason to be less hurried and to **pay more attention to what is**. After all, all we have is this moment. I realized that so much of my life has been spent in the hunt, climbing the ladder of so-called success. I've spent so much time **judging myself** and trying to **prove myself** while looking to others for approval and validation.

I've spent so much time trying to fix myself, only to now realize that **I'm already whole**. I came to realize that I was already lovable. I was already **loved unconditionally by God** and by myself. I gasped and felt a huge sense of relief wash over me. Slow down. **Breathe**. Be still. **You are lovable**. You are loving. You are brave. You are strong. You are worthy. You are good.



Turns out, the stillness and simplicity I had been yearning for wasn't outside. It was **within me all along**. It's just that I'd never slowed down long enough to gain access to it. Turns out the words I'd been using to push myself only left me feeling distressed, small, scattered, unaccomplished, broken, and unlovable.



I am discovering **a new narrative** that is exactly the opposite. Today, it brings me joy to be who I am. **I feel good** knowing that I am here to **be of service**. I am here to **share my story** — the dark and light of it. I am here to use my voice whenever I can to help others. I am also here to use it to be of service to my friends, my family, my community, my state, and my country as I see fit. **My new narrative**, unlike my old one, is loving. It's kind. It's supportive. It's encouraging. It's non-judgmental.

It no longer compares me to giants in my family long gone. It instead recognizes all that I am and all that I have been through. It allows me to **look forward with loving-kindness** and passionate purpose. We can each craft a narrative for ourselves that is loving, positive, encouraging, motivating, powerful, and true. Tell your story that way, then get about living it.

***Personal reflection:***

How will I write or rewrite a narrative that allows me to see myself as gifted, hopeful, and loved, at this moment in my life?

What will allow me/us to commit to carving out the time to be still in order to rewrite my/our narrative as women religious?

***Reading:*** Matt: 25

*After a long time the master came back and settled with those servants. The one who received five talents came forward bringing five more. His master said, "Well done, good and faithful servant. Since you are faithful in small matters, I will give you more responsibilities. The one who had been given two talents came forward and said, "Master, I have gained two more." The master said, "Well done good and faithful servant." Then the one who had been given one talent came forward and said, "Out of fear, I went off and buried your talent in the ground. Here it is back." To everyone who has, more will be given, but from the one who has not, even that will be taken away.*



***Commentary:***

*It matters not what talents one has. What matters is how one uses them. God never demands more from us than our abilities allow. What God demands is that one uses to the fullest what one possesses. If we trust in the protective love of God and remain open to possibilities, our own capabilities will yield increase. Any gift of grace provides an opportunity for divine investment.* Melva Wilson Costen (Give Us This Day Missalette, August 31)

***Communal Reflection/Sharing:***



How do we make/find meaning given the context in which we are living this way of life and mission as women religious?

What/Who inspires us to dig deeper, reach higher, when we find ourselves mired in cynicism, helplessness, and discouragement?

How do we care enough to offer our very best?

What does ongoing discernment, living out of a contemplative place look like at this time?

What is the narrative that is operative in our community?

*Song:* Three Feet or So – Carrie Newcomer  
found in *The Beautiful not Yet* ©2016

If I start by being kind  
Love usually follows right behind  
It nods its head and softly hums  
Saying "Honey that's the way it's done."

We don't have to search for love  
Wring our hands and wring our hearts  
All we have to do is know  
The love will find us in the dark

[Chorus]  
And the things that have saved us  
Are still here to save us  
It's not out there somewhere  
It's right here, it's right here

I can't change the whole world  
But I can change the world I know  
What's within three feet or so

We are body, skin and bones  
We're all the love we've ever known  
When I don't know what is right  
I hold it up into the Light  
I hold it up into the Light  
I hold it up into the Light



*... When you care enough to send the very best!*