

Reflection for Sister Maria Goretti  
*by Sister Michele Bisbey*

The readings we've just heard proclaimed  
and much of the music  
was chosen many years ago by Sister Maria Goretti  
for the celebration of this next phase of her life  
within the God of Providence.

Perhaps, the most "Goretti like" choice,  
as we've heard numerous times over the past few days,  
is the image of the dance.

Maria loved dance.  
But the dance her life invites us to--  
is not a couples' dance  
where the partners are wrapped in the intimacy of each other.

Maria's dance was with our Provident God  
who is triune.  
And so, the dance is a circle dance  
that is choreographed with organic rhythms,  
and a variety of steps.  
It is a dance of ever widening inclusion.

This invitation to the dance  
is an invitation to relationship  
with God,  
with one another,  
with all of creation.

In the dance we are stretched to leave our familiar comfort zones,  
to widen our boundaries,  
continually spiraling outward,  
all the while evolving,  
creating new patterns and forms  
of communion and interdependence  
until our circle encompasses the peripheries.

You might say,

I certainly would say  
"That sounds lovely, but I don't know how to dance,  
I'm not able,  
I don't know the steps..."

Here's the wonderful thing we learn from Maria.  
We can learn the steps.  
The Scriptures she chose  
tell us what the steps are.

The first reading reminds us that  
as in dance  
timing is everything.

And in God's Providence there is a time for every thing.  
as over and over again  
we allow the Provident One,  
to take the lead.

In and out,  
around and around  
we are lured to follow,  
to listen to the beat of God's heart  
to feel within ourselves the heart beat of Providence.

In time,  
we no longer need to count the beats  
because our hearts are in time,  
in sync  
with the Lord of the Dance.

And today's gospel reading  
(a familiar and favorite of the Sisters of Divine Providence)  
illustrates the transition from the mundane steps and structures  
to the beats, patterns and rhythms  
that characterize  
the realm of a Provident God  
the realm of abundance and possibility.

In this realm  
we can put aside fears and anxieties and take a lesson  
from the birds of the air and the flowers of the field.

In the realm of abundance and possibility—  
we become grateful and  
discover that a life  
without anxiety  
is a viable option.

In this dance  
no one  
is ever left out of our circles of care and hospitality.

In this dance  
no one  
ever has to live without the basic necessities,  
as we share not only our abundance,  
but our sustenance.

In this dance  
no one  
ever has to worry about tomorrow,  
because we know that the God of Providence—does indeed rise before the sun.

As we let go and join hands in the circle dance,  
we recognize our inter- connectedness with all of creation.

As we let go and join hands in the circle dance  
we recognize our inter- dependence on one another.

As we let go and join hands in the circle dance  
we support,  
protect,  
and provide for each other  
as our Provident God  
has provided for us,  
and whatever God has provided is enough.

Like the birds who live with the freedom  
that comes from knowing and enjoying their place  
in an interconnected eco-system,  
like the flowers who parade a beauty which can only exist  
because of the soil  
which has been fertilized by other creatures  
and the pollen which they share freely with one another,  
we live rich,  
worry-free,  
interdependent lives.

Today we join hands  
to embrace our commitment  
to care for one another with inclusivity.

Today we join hands  
to embrace our commitment  
to nurture and protect our connections with all of creation.

Today we join hands  
to embrace our commitment

to celebrate our interdependence.

Today we join hands

to embrace our commitment

to live in gratefulness for all that we have

knowing that it is enough,

indeed more than enough.