



On Water Jugs

Judy Cassidy
EDITOR

As I write this column, it is the week after CHA's Annual Assembly in San Antonio and I am in my office looking at a photo taken on a visit to Pompeii. It is a picture of dozens of water jugs that were unearthed from the ruins of the city, which was buried under lava when Mount Vesuvius erupted in 79 AD. As I look at these earthen vessels—their lovely shapes, textures, and colors—I can almost see the people of Pompeii carrying them and filling them. And I feel close to those people of long ago, as if I am somehow entering into their lives by appreciating the simple beauty of objects they used every day.

Looking at the photo, I am reminded of the assembly, especially keynoter David McCullough's story of another city—Johnstown, PA—which was destroyed by a flood in 1889. He told of the people who came from miles around to help the townspeople rebuild.

I am reminded of Sidney Callahan's warning that in our rush toward euthanasia, we are failing to honor our connections to one another. We are forgetting that our individual actions always affect others.

I am reminded of the pioneering sisters whose stories were told by Emily Friedman and by CHA's video *A Call to Care*—women who can teach us about caring for others, even at great personal sacrifice.

At the assembly we also learned about the operational, management, and sponsorship issues we must understand to preserve the ministry for those

who will follow us in the future. We are as connected to them, and to the people they will serve, as we are to those who preceded us. "We're not

about money; we're about people," as Abp. Patrick Flores reminded us in his assembly homily.

Today I heard about Dr. Kevorkian assisting another suicide. And I heard about an elderly couple who lost their savings paying medical bills not covered under the substandard health insurance policy a salesman persuaded them to buy. And I heard about another church burning in the South.

In the face of such events—events that expose how disconnected from each other we can be—where do we get the strength to carry on a ministry built on the notion of caring for one another? From experiences like the assembly. From wise people like those who spoke there. From friends and co-workers who support us. From gazing on water jugs.



We are
connected to
those who will
follow us, as
we are to
those who
preceded us.