

# THAT ALL MAY BE ONE

A documentary about the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet

[www.thatallmaybeone.com](http://www.thatallmaybeone.com)

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## Director's Statement:

I never set out to be a documentary filmmaker. Instead, this remarkable story found me, and required a visual presence to tell it properly. So I set out on this important journey, not knowing quite where it would take me. Indeed, just the concept of nuns brings forth a torrent of emotions for any individual brought up in the Catholic Church. For students who attended Catholic parochial schools, nuns are an ever-vigilant presence of cautionary tales lurking in their subconscious. No matter how old one becomes, when confronted with one of "those looks" the receiver melts into a frightened second grader. Yet, nuns are people too and we rarely see or hear about their work or lives.

Although we have entered the 21st century, nuns continue to be shrouded in mystery. Today few sisters wear habits making it hard to even identify a nun. Only a small number continue to teach in Catholic schools. A Los Angeles Times feature article in 2000, about the declining number of sisters, inspired me to pick up a camera and tell their story before it was too late.

I was able to secure approval to shoot the documentary because of family ties: My cousin, Sister Joan Lampton, is a member of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet in St. Louis, Missouri. The order is particularly fascinating because the nuns had decided to renovate their 1840 Motherhouse on the bluffs above the Mississippi river rather than raze or abandon it. This remarkable decision represents the nuns' commitment to their dear neighbors and their ruling dictum "That All May Be One," taken from St. John's gospel. I was fortunate that a friend in the MFA film program at USC was willing to be my director of photography. My employer, California State University Northridge, supported my endeavor and we began taping in summer 2001. After three trips, 60 hours of footage, and years of post-production angst searching for the story, we completed this compelling documentary.

As the number of sisters decrease the documentary chronicles a disappearing way of life. In spite of the odds, these women are charming, funny, and pragmatic as they continue to make tomorrow. I'm honored they allowed me to tell their story.

—Karen Kearns, Director/Writer/Producer

