CREATIVITY, THE UNIVERSE, AND A POMEGRANATE SEED
By Mary Alice Dooley

For much of my life I’ve been fascinated with a variety of subjects and authors that seemed to have no relationship to the work I was doing or to each other. Periodically I would go to a library or bookstore for some unstructured research, generally with no thought that I would ever do anything with what I learned. Two of my favorite subjects on the list for countless years were “creativity/creation” and “pomegranates.”

Late in my career with General Motors I found that I had more personal time to work on creative projects. I recognized and was blown away by the energy that flowed and overflowed in me when I was doing this work. It was all tremendously exciting and motivating. During this time, I was living in California where I had access to a good supply of the fruit I loved most. Life was good but the closest I ever got to combining these creative projects and pomegranates together was while wiping pomegranate stains from whatever it was that I was creating!

After moving to Michigan and retiring, I joined a women’s group and we decided to do a collaborative project. Each of us was to bring an object that could be enhanced by the other members as well as a journal where we could note our experiences. I decided fairly quickly that I wanted to use “creativity” as my theme, but had no idea what I could use as an object to represent such a broad and lofty subject. Then, as I ate my last pomegranate for the season, I suddenly realized that I had found a worthy candidate.

From my research I had learned that the pomegranate was an ancient fruit from western Asia and the Middle East. For countless millennia the pomegranate has held a strong place in myth and legend and has served as a symbol of fertility, beauty, procreation, increase and abundance, unity (though many seeded), the natural cycle, renewal, partnership, royalty, and rebirth. In addition to its many practical uses, the pomegranate is a source of healing and has strong medicinal properties too numerous to mention.

I have come to see the pomegranate as a macrocosm and a microcosm of all creation, its rosy skin representing the blush of expansion and growth of the Universe, of Earth, and of the individual human and all other beings. The fruit starts from one seed but eventually its insides are bursting with hundreds of pips or arils, each one bearing the potential for new and lush creation. The pomegranate became and remains for me a symbol of the Creative Powers and Process, the Creativity of the Universe.
And so I let “my creativity” (I use this expression lightly because I know that this creativity is not something I own but something that works through me) take over and I crocheted a pomegranate to represent the creativity of the Universe. I beaded the inside, not with red glass reflecting the fruit’s natural ruby seeds, but with beads of many colors to emphasize the diversity of creation.

While visiting a friend a few years after completing this project, a necklace shaped like a pomegranate, even showing the seeds it contained, almost jumped into my hands. I knew, immediately, that this would be the symbol I would adopt and wear from then on. Though the chain has had to be repaired a number of times, (it has held up well despite the fact that I seldom take it off,) I wear the pomegranate with pride. I am often asked about the significance of my necklace and love the opportunities this gives me to explain the symbolism of my pomegranate and what it represents for me.

The more I study and meditate on these subjects, the more I recognize that it is the job of every element of creation, every galaxy, planet, moon, volcano, earthworm, merganser, and human being to participate fully in order to further the creative ends of the Universe. All of us have the seeds of creativity planted deep within us. We are all called to co-create, to participate actively in the creativity and evolution of the Universe.

Despite human interference, Nature fulfills this purpose without questioning how or why. We humans, on the other hand, struggle, struggle, struggle with what we are to do, why and how. How do we contribute to the building of creation? Through creativity, compassion, the appreciation of beauty, the sharing of ourselves and our stories, through care for Earth and the Universe, through our search for understanding of the meaning of why we’re here and what we need to do to grow and encourage growth in everything that surrounds us.

This is a tremendous challenge, but one filled with deep meaning and great joy!