

RSHM SOUNDINGS is a quarterly publication of the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary, Eastern and Western American and Northern European Provinces, and Zambezi Region. Waves sent out, reflected back, reveal an inner reality not always evident on the surface. Thus SOUNDINGS probes RSHM life in expanding circles of ministry and community. You, our readers, are part of our life. We invite your comments and suggestions so that your thoughts may be reflected in these pages.

r soundings h m



Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary
English Speaking Provinces

Volume XIV, Number 3
Autumn 2011

ROOTS AND SHOOTS

by Catherine Gough, RSHM

BELO HORIZONTE, BRAZIL. The RSHM transformation journey is an ongoing dynamic process. Our traditions, roots of internationality, diverse languages, being one body for mission, have always included visionary aspects, shoots such as adaptation to new contexts, cultures and circumstances, and needs of mission. Newness springs from reflection and prayerful discernment.

After many years of study and discernment in the area of our formation we now have a new face at the Novitiate level: one international bilingual novitiate in Belo Horizonte, Brazil.

The spirit, charism, and deep values of the Institute remain the same; the way of being is new. It is both something old and something new, but is becoming "what we can neither see nor imagine," "a future not our own." Our novices explain their new reality:

"This novitiate has a team of four formators, including the Formation Directress, representing different cultures. We use two languages, English and Portuguese, allowing us to experience a richness of intercultural interaction. Novices no longer belong to a particular province / region, but to the entire Institute. After first profession, they are not automatically ex-



Isabel Cipriano, Mozambique; Bernadette McNamara, NEP; Mercy Nkhuwa, Zambia; Maria Conceição Reis, Brazil; Naiara Alves da Silva, Brazil; Catherine Gough, Zambezi Region.

pected to return to their province / region for mission but can be sent anywhere where the Institute recognizes a particular need. In formation, the novice is helped to think in terms of the Institute mission and the world at large." Mavis Muwela.

"We all like change but the journey of personal transformation is difficult. I have experienced this now that I have come from Zambia to Brazil. It is hard and painful to miss everything that I have grown up to know and feel as part of me and yet I have to enter into this culture that is new and different while remaining true to myself. This transition is challenging – to be an old

person and a new creation in Christ." Mercy Nkhuwa.

"Leaving everything to follow Jesus is not easy. It often means dying to the old me to become new. When I accept the process of death and resurrection in everyday life, my new life will bring new life to others. Transformation is also experienced in apostolic activities and in welcoming the other. All things and people affect us, both within and outside the novitiate. I have come to know that daily experience of sorrows and joys is a true experience of paschal mystery and through acceptance of these I can

(continued on page 6)

GRACED HISTORY, PROMISED FUTURE

by Rosamond Blanchet, RSHM

BRONX, NY. "Nothing worth doing is completed in our lifetime; therefore, we are saved by hope. Nothing true or beautiful or good makes sense in any immediate context of history; therefore, we are saved by faith. Nothing we do, however virtuous, can be accomplished alone; therefore we are saved by love." (Reinhold Niebuhr)

Faith, hope, and love are the theological gifts that sustain us on life's journey in the present, creating the future that eventually becomes the past.

My most recent past experience in ministry, from 1997 to 2009, was in RSHM province administration as Provincial Councillor and Provincial Superior. It was a joy and privilege to relate to our sisters. Their involvement in so many diverse ministries is truly inspiring and the depth of commitment to others is a testament to our RSHM spirit of zeal.

On July 31, 2009, I left the Provincial Center, the last day of my ministry as provincial. I recall vividly in August 2009 when God graced me in prayer to ritualize the closing of the Provincial Center door. The grace of this encounter enabled me to move forward in freedom and trust into an unknown future.

The future took shape when I was asked to become Associate Vicar for Religious for the Archdiocese of New York. The ministry is new but there is obvious continuity in my service relating to the women and men religious of the Archdiocese. I work with Catherine Cleary, PVBM, who is Vicar for Religious. As vicars we act as liaisons between Archbishop Timothy Dolan and the apostolic and contemplative religious of the Archdiocese. We visit congregations, attend elections of major superiors of the diocesan congregations, and lend pastoral support to local communities and individual religious. We relate to new congregations seeking to serve in the Archdiocese and deal with



Sr. Mary Hughes OP, Archbishop Timothy Dolan, Sr. Helen Garvey BVM, Sr. Carol Barnes SC, Sr. Rosamond Blanchet RSHM, and Sr. Maureen Shaughnessy SC

various official and canonical issues as they arise.

A project in which I was involved during the past year was planning the opening reception for the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) Exhibit "Women & Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America" at the Ellis Island Immigration Museum, New York City. The Exhibit which began at the Smithsonian Institute, Washington, DC., has travelled throughout the nation. The Exhibit highlights dramatic moments in US history. This history of almost 300 hundred years of commitment and dedication on the part of Catholic sisters who established schools, hospitals, colleges and provided other social services is quite inspiring. At the ribbon cutting ceremony Archbishop Timothy Dolan commented that "a unique charism of women religious is that they seem to possess an 'inbuilt radar' to find and help people in need. You have your ear close to the heartbeat of the Church, and this exhibit shows that."

My present ministry, while filled with newness, continues to be an opportunity to relate to so many religious whose dedication I truly admire. Our God ever ancient, ever new, continues to call. ♦

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editors of *Soundings*,

My name is Maria Garguilo and I am a graduate of Mother Butler Memorial High School, Class of 1964.

I am a Dominican Sister of Sparkill and currently the Assistant Principal of Msgr. Scanlan High School. In the latest edition of *Soundings*, I was so happy to read the article by Mother Georgellen. She was my Latin teacher and one of my favorites. I hope she is well. She brings back fond memories of my high school days. I loved to go to school and we went even in a blizzard!!!

I received a wonderful education from your Sisters and I am so grateful to them. I rely on so many of the skills they taught me. Being an MBM girl is something I will always have with me and they gave me that!

Please remember me to her, as one of her students who remembers and treasures the value of everything I learned at 1500 Pelham Parkway South. ♦

NEXT ISSUE:

ORDINARY TIME

SOMETHING OLD, SOMETHING NEW

by Pierre Dullaghan, RSHM

FERRYBANK, IRELAND. The “old” was once “new”. I quote from a letter written by the local priest announcing the arrival of the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary in Ferrybank, Ireland: “The nuns of the Sacred Heart of Mary are to take possession of the new and charming house before the lapse of a month and shall devote themselves to the education of young ladies in which they have been very successful on the continent of Europe and in America.”

So the foundation in Ireland was established. At 7:00 a.m. 16th September 1879, the nine sisters arrived by boat. From the deck they could see their new home on an elevation above the south bank of the river Suir. Plasterers, joiners, and painters were still at work and some parishioners were endeavouring to clear up the mess. The community spent the first day familiarizing themselves with their new home. That night they ate by the light of the fire since the gas had not yet been turned on. It was a challenging beginning met with the enthusiasm instilled in their hearts by Father Gailhac.

The following year Gailhac came with M. St. Felix and three other Superiors to share in this enthusiasm. They blessed the property and visited the classes in the three schools. The little ones were enchanted with the old priest who could talk to them only through a sister acting as interpreter.

And the years rolled on. Sixty five years later I arrived as a pupil. By this time the building had been greatly extended and included a beautiful chapel. During my time at school preparations were underway for celebrating the Centenary of our Foundation so I benefited greatly from the memories of early days being brought to new life. In time, I entered the Novitiate which had been established there in 1939.

Another great passage of time



The original building in Ferrybank



Grianán Close, our newest building

elapsed, and in 2005 I came back with a great sense of joy and anticipation to visit my alma mater. I found an empty space where all those classrooms, community rooms and the beautiful chapel had been. The old house had become an empty shell from which had emerged Madonna House, a new home for the community with special accommodation for the older sisters. It was a consolation to find old friends there.

But the winds of change were blowing once again. Additional accommodation was needed for a new community. Plans were being discussed at the Provincial level and sisters responded positively, leading to what we see to-day. Grianán Close was the name chosen, *grianán* meaning ‘sunrise’.

The 8th September 2010 was chosen as a fitting day to celebrate this new moment in our RSHM life in Ferrybank. Through ritual and prayer we blessed, not just the buildings but the giftedness and dedication of those who had worked on them, and, of course, the sisters of Madonna House and Grianán Close who would pray and live in them.

We thank God for the gift of Grianán Close which is a continuation of the vision of our founders “that all my have life.” ♦

SOMETHING FROM A WEDDING

by Maureen Hallinan Grubert

NOTRE DAME, IND. *Excerpt from the homily presented in the Log Cabin Chapel on Notre Dame University campus, July 17, 2011, by Maureen Hallinan Grubert.*

We thank God for Carrie and Chris whom we honor and celebrate today. How quiet and orderly life would be without them! This wise and mature young couple knows that marriage is a commitment of love to each other. They choose to also take into account the fact that marriage is shaped by the religious, family and community traditions that are part of their history and who they are today. Most important, they realize that marriage provides an opportunity to express their faith in a living, loving God by embedding their marriage in their faith community. We, members of that faith community, pledge our support to them in their ongoing efforts to live a God-centered life — a life of faith, service, and thirst for social justice. Carrie and Chris already live a life of service as individuals. I have heard them describe their work on health and human services in terms of serving the underprivileged. Now their challenge is to live that way as a couple and to know that we offer them our encouragement, assistance, and love as they strive to live a God centered life.

The portrait of God that St. John presents in the Gospel read today is astonishing and breathtaking. Put most simply, God is Love. God’s nature and essence is love so God has no choice but to love us. God the Father, and God the Son, are suffused by the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of love. We relate poorly to an understanding of God that stresses various theological dogmas, such as three persons in one God and two natures in one person. We cannot accept the idea

(continued on page 6)

REMEMBERING A LEGENDARY PRESIDENT

by Martina Crowley, RSHM



ARLINGTON, VA. On Thursday, May 26, 2011, the newly sculptured statue of Sr. Majella Berg, RSHM was blessed at a special ceremony honoring her and her significant contribution to Marymount University. The statue represents Majella with two students, reflecting her commitment to education and to the success of the students of Marymount University. It is placed at the opening to the plaza between the two new buildings: Rose Benté Ostapenko Residence Hall for 239 students and Caruthers Hall, an academic building focusing on the sciences and health sciences. Dr. James Bundschuh, the retiring President, welcomed the gathering of RSHM, trustees, faculty, staff, students, alumnae/i and friends. Fr. David Sharland YA, the University Chaplain, blessed the statue and Martina Crowley, RSHM, gave a warm tribute to Majella as follows:

Today we gather to bless this statue of Majella Berg, member of the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary, who spent 68 years as an RSHM, serving in the field of education in New York and here in Arlington, Virginia. In 1934, Majella began her grace-filled life journey as a Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary, loving God with a simple faith and a desire to bring God's love and compassion to all. Majella saw her vocation as doing God's will wherever and whatever she was missioned to do. Her blue habit and veil were visible reminders of

her commitment to religious life. Majella lived our charism—to know and love God and to make God known and loved. She shared this charism with the civic community in the Arlington and Washington, DC areas. Through all her public accomplishments, her primary focus was this RSHM mission. Majella was a woman of vision as an educator and leader in the community. In her usual soft-spoken and reserved manner, she was a beacon whose life radiated peace and goodness. In the midst of her great accomplishments, there were many challenges, but her faith in God gave her a sense of serenity.

Marymount meant the world to her and she gave herself untiringly to make it the institution of higher learning that continues to offer quality education in a multi-cultural reality. She was faithful to the RSHM traditions and values that have permeated our institutions, namely, emphasis on rigorous thinking and scholarship that is in keeping with the Catholic intellectual tradition, focus on opportunities for spiritual and ethical development, a spirit of service and outreach to others, especially the poor, the voiceless, the marginalized, concern for the promotion of justice and fostering a sense of community among individuals. Kahlil Gibran, in the treatise on Work, says, "What is it to work with love? It is to weave the cloth with threads drawn from your heart; it is to build a house with affection; it is to sow seeds with tenderness and reap the harvest with joy; it is to charge all things you fashion with a breath of your own spirit." This was the work ethic of Majella. I believe this sculpture captures Majella as an educator interacting with the students she loved so dearly. May it be a testament to the values and tradition that mark our RSHM mission and that will continue to guide Marymount University into the future. ♦

NEW HONOR FOR A FINE OLD NAME

by Paul Carty

WHITE PLAINS, NY. A special presentation was made at the Commencement Exercises of Archbishop Stepinac High School on June 4, 2011. The summons to the stage was a complete surprise to Margaret Morrissey, RSHM, who was retiring after 26 years of service at this Archdiocesan school for young men. The citation read:

"Our final presentation is made to Sr. Margaret Morrissey, RSHM. Sr. Margaret has served this school for the past 26 years as a teacher, guidance counselor, and as an administrator. Sr. Margaret taught French and psychology; was a member of the Guidance Department, served as Director of Guidance and Director of Admissions. We thank her for her faithful and dedicated service.

Sr. Margaret was recognized by the school when she received the *Sequere Deum* Award. She was honored by the Archdiocese with the Elizabeth Ann Seton Compassionate Educator Award. Sr. Margaret was also celebrated by the French government with induction to the Legion of Honor, the highest award bestowed on a civilian, rarely given to anyone outside of France.

The motto of the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary is taken from the gospel of John: "That all may have life." We thank Sr. Margaret for the life that she has given to this school and proudly announce that, from this day forward, the Admissions Office will be known as the Morrissey Admissions Office." ♦



REMEMBERING MARY MILLIGAN, RSHM

By Patricia Connor, RSHM

MONTEBELLO, CA. *Mary Milligan RSHM, past General Superior, died on April 2, 2011. The following eulogy was written by Patricia Connor, RSHM.*

With all our RSHM Sisters throughout the world who cannot be physically present, yet are united with Mary and with all of you who have come to celebrate her life, I ask God to welcome her warmly Home.

As I began to prepare these remarks, a number of thoughts came to mind. Mary—daughter, sister, aunt, poet, author, teacher, scholar, theologian, spiritual guide, gardener and lover of creation, linguist, inspirer of dreams, daughter of the Church, Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary. I could go on, and I am sure you could go on, too.

Mary is a giant in the Institute of the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary. For more than forty years she was a huge presence in all our provinces and regions. She occupies a very special place in our history. Becoming a general councilor shortly after the close of the Second Vatican Council, Mary contributed significantly to the renewal called for by the Second Vatican Council within our Institute and within many other congregations of women religious as well. Totally fluent in French, steeped in French history and French culture, and deeply knowledgeable of French spirituality, past and present, she was uniquely able to lead us to discover anew our mid-nineteenth century French Founder, Father Jean Gailhac, and French Foundress, Mother St. Jean Cure Pelissier, and our first sisters and to help us understand them at a depth we had never known before. She helped us to understand the meaning of the communal charism of a religious



congregation and what this offered the Church for the life of the world, and she helped us to discover our distinctive communal charism—to discover the treasure hidden in the field—to understand our past and to link it to our life and mission today. She wrote voluminously on our Sources, translated historical works and letters from their original French and Portuguese with great earnestness for accuracy. She led all of us in an Institute-wide process of rewriting our Constitutions, helping us to articulate in a corporate way our experience of living the Gospel and our life and mission in the Church and the world. As General Superior of the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary and under her leadership, our Constitutions were accepted and approved by the universal Church. Her retreats on our Constitutions in all parts of our Institute were a gift, and she challenged us to integrate ever more fully how we were living with our communal word.

Mary loved God's Word. God's Word was her life. She taught the Word, spoke the Word, and lived the Word. Her love of Scripture was communicated to her students in a way that invited each one to go and discover for herself and himself

that, "Yes, God's Word is Life." She was committed to the strong, solid formation of persons for religious life and the priesthood, and she believed strongly that our lives need to be rooted in God's Word. She believed deeply in the importance of formation—ongoing as well as initial—and to this end she wrote articles, gave retreats, and was a spiritual director to many.

As a leader of women religious and a theologian, Mary was sought after as a speaker and teacher, and her insights and reflections always contributed greatly to a conference and meeting. She was a member of the International Union of Superiors' General Council of 16 with whom Pope John Paul II consulted, was invited to the Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on Consecrated Life and Its Role in the Church and World, and participated in the Church's International Meeting on Seminaries and Catholic Institutions of Higher Learning. She was frequently called upon to be part of theological groups studying significant issues of the day.

She was a beloved teacher at Marymount College, Loyola Marymount University, and St. John's Seminary. She had a great love for teaching and inspired her students to love learning, continue inquiring, and to dream big dreams. Mary was an international person, a citizen of the world, who was always proud of her southern California roots and, as we would kid her, being a Valley girl.

Fortunately, she has left us a rich legacy. Her books, conferences, articles, her translated works and letters, and many of her own letters remain. Her words will live on, as will the example she has left us. Her life has been very fruitful, and she will continue to give life.

We give thanks to God for you, Mary. Our love and gratitude, Mary, will endure. ♦

CONTRIBUTORS

Rosamond Blanchet, RSHM, former Provincial Superior of the Eastern American Province, is Associate Vicar for Religious, Archdiocese of New York.

Paul Carty is Principal of Archbishop Stepinac High School in White Plains, NY.

Patricia Connor, RSHM, past General Superior, serves on the Board and tutors at the Alternative Education Work center of *A Place Called Home*, Los Angeles, CA.

Martina Crowley, RSHM, is Coordinator of Marymount Convent, Tarrytown, NY

Pierre Dullaghan, RSHM, retired in Barrow, England, is *Soundings* coordinator for the Northern European Province.

Maria Garguilo, OP, is Assistant Principal of Msgr. Scanlan High School, Bronx, NY.

Catherine Gough, RSHM, is Institute Formation Directress at the RSHM International Novitiate in Belo Horizonte, Brazil.

Maureen Hallinan Grubert (formerly Teresita Hallinan, RSHM) is a professor of Sociology of Education at the University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana. Her focus is study of the effects of school characteristics on students' cognitive and social development.



EDITORS: Margaret McKenna, RSHM
 Bea McMahon, RSHM
 Pierre Dullaghan, RSHM
 Joanne Safian, RSHM
 Cathrine Chitali, RSHM
 Monica Walsh, RSHM
 Mary Alice Young, RSHM

ART EDITOR: Edith Hart, RSHM
LAYOUT: Bianca Haglich, RSHM

www.rshm.org
 www.rshmnep.org
 province@rshmeap.org
 Printed by Commerce Press,
 Hawthorne, NY

(continued from page 1)

become another Christ." Deborah Jamali.

"I feel myself being shaped by God in a new way in this time of solitude and withdrawal, trusting in God and the sisters with whom I live. The international novitiate is challenging and yet enriching, providing space to grow together in interdependent relationships of love, justice and reconciliation." Naiara Alves da Silva.

As Judy Cannato writes: "What is new is rooted in the past and has continuity with it even as it breaks new ground." (*Field of Compassion*)

(continued from page 3)

that God can be vengeful, angry, judgmental, and impatient. But if we take St. John's words seriously, we become free to accept, embrace and respond to God's love. The key to living the Gospel is to believe that no matter how deep is our love for each other, it is only a pale shadow of God's love for us.

Believing in God's love gives us the motivation to develop a personal relationship with God and to live peacefully and joyfully in that love. That is the faith and the precious gift we, Carrie and Chris' faith community, share with them as they begin their married life together. ♦

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary
 50 Wilson Park Drive
 Tarrytown, New York 10591



Non-Profit Org
 U.S. Postage
 PAID
 White Plains, NY
 Permit No. 5198