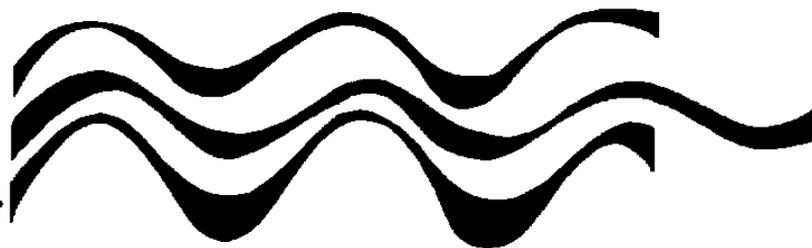


RSHM SOUNDINGS is a quarterly publication of the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary, Eastern and Western American and Northern European Provinces, and Zambezi Region. Waves sent out, reflected back, reveal an inner reality not always evident on the surface. Thus SOUNDINGS probes RSHM life in expanding 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 XXII, Number 1
Spring 2014

BOOK ALERT!

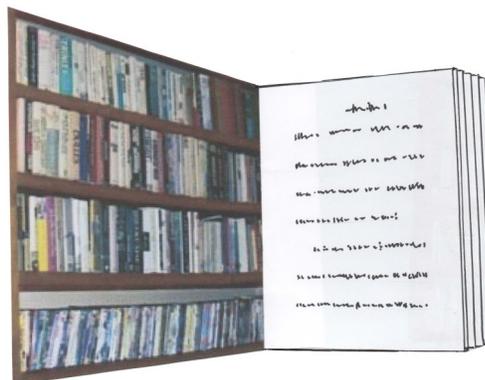
by Cathy Garcia, RSHM

MONTEBELLO, CA. I remember hearing that when Pope John Paul died so suddenly he had a Time magazine on his nightstand. It was replaced with a Bible because the magazine was not seen to be appropriate reading for a Pope! This anecdote has amused me because I have often wondered what reading material will be strewn around my bedroom at the time of my demise.

My brother, Lou, died unexpectedly six years ago. Well aware that he was a lover of books, we were still surprised to discover in the bookshelves installed everywhere that he had collected between 4500 to 5000 books. He was a city administrator but the topics of his books ranged from city government and planning to biographies and history to art and cooking.

I realize that I myself am usually relating to four or five books at a time, often of very diverse topics. This Christmas, even with the onset of electronic readers, my family exchanged 15-20 books among us. My Mom at 95 is no slouch either. Every 3 weeks I take out six large print books from the library for her. She usually has them read before the three weeks lending time is up!!

I suspect that we were infected by this love of books from my Dad. As a child I remember Dad bringing home books from used bookstores.



He loved history and lives of the saints. But the symbol of his love of books remains in our family home. He very lovingly built a bookcase on the wall in the den. Today it hangs over my mom's flat screen television. Bookstores are disappearing but books still hit us in the face every time we enter Mom's house.

While the anecdote about the Pope and Time magazine has amused me, it also has annoyed me. Reading books, magazines (and the internet) provides a window for individuals isolated for a variety of reasons to engage the wider reality. Those surrounding the Pope could have learned a lesson from my Dad who gave us through books a wider view of the world and reality to which we were sent to give and receive life.

Two books I have recently

read are *I Am Malala* by Malala Yousafzai and *My Beloved World* by Sonia Sotomayor. The early lives of these two women have been limited by gender and cultural issues. While Malala with great support from her father is a young and courageous advocate for the education of all girls, Sonia, the first Hispanic Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, is living proof of Malala's dream. We read that Malala never wanted to be apart from her school books and Sonia highlights how her mother made the Encyclopedia Britannica a financial priority in their low income household. Both had parents who valued education and knew that books were essential in the lives of their children.

Dad, thanks for bringing home "new" used books and for building that beautiful bookcase!♦

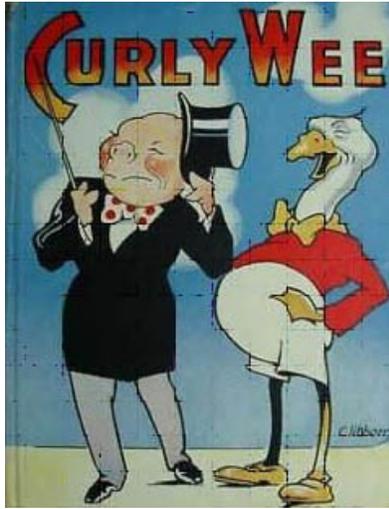
INTRODUCTION TO THE JOYS OF READING

by Ethna Egan, RSHM

NEUILLY, FRANCE. As far back as I can remember, my home in Ballybeg is there. It was an ordinary farmhouse, but my fond memory is that it was always full of people and activity.

Seventy-six years ago, my home had no television, movies were few and far between, and John Duffy & Sons circus came around once a year. Outside of the home area, there was little extraordinary entertainment. Luckily for me, I grew up in a household of readers. Adults modeling reading is the best incentive one can give a child.

My father in particular was an avid reader. His delight after a day's work was to choose a book and read to his heart's content by the fire. I still remember him chuckling to himself as he read. Often, he would read a quote out loud for my mother (or for anyone else around) from *Speeches from the Dock* or from a book by Norman Vincent



Peale called *The Power of Positive Thinking* or from some other of his many books. My mother was often too busy to hear what he was saying! But his actions left an impression on me and on others in the house. He was a role model for reading before I even knew what a role model was.

Having lots of literature around

is a great motivation for reading. We had many publications coming into the house too: the daily paper, *The Far East*, *Ireland's Own*, *Old Moore's Almanac*, etc. However, the book we as children loved most of all was called *Curley Wee and Gussie Goose*. This came out quarterly and it was about animals acting and talking like humans. Written in rhyme, it was a takeoff on society at the time. My oldest sister would read a few pages of it to us at night and, being in the drama club, she read with great expression and made us laugh. We loved looking at the pictures and the poses of the characters.

When I think of those by-gone days, I realize how much they influenced the teacher I would become. I am thoroughly convinced of the truth of Albert Einstein's words: "It is the supreme art of the teacher to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge."♦

ELEGANCE OF THE HEDGEHOG

by Edith Hart, RSHM

BRONX, NY. *The Elegance of the Hedgehog* is a novel by the French novelist and professor of philosophy, Muriel Barbery. It is translated into English by Alison Anderson.

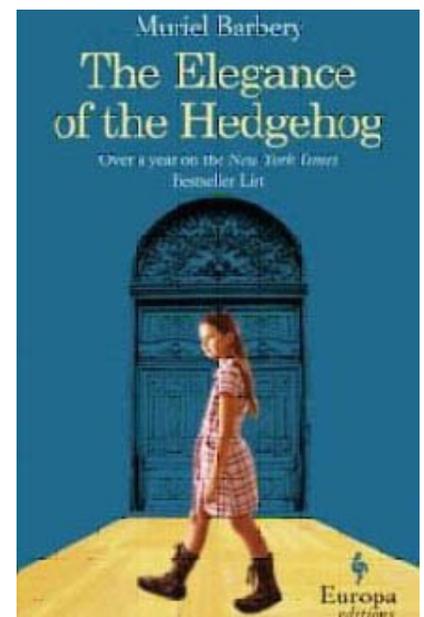
This is a wondrous story about relationships that are honest, intimate, funny, and profound. The main characters are Renée Michel, an invisible concierge in an upper class apartment house in Paris and Paloma Josse, a pre-teen living with her family in the building. Paloma has decided to commit suicide on her 13th birthday. She sees her life as meaningless because of the privilege and superficiality of the lives of those who live around her, including her family.

Renée has been at work in the

building for 27 years. She wants to remain invisible and ordinary to protect her job but, actually, she is very well educated and cultured. In a back room in her apartment Renée enjoys listening to opera, eating good food, and reading works of literature by authors such as Leo Tolstoy and Edmund Husserl.

Paloma begins to feel that there is more to Renée than she projects publicly but, aside from casual meetings in the elevator or entrance lobby, they do not really connect. Then a very sensitive, cultured Japanese businessman named Kakuro Ozo moves into the apartment building. He very quickly recognizes Renée's intelligence

(continued on page 5)



WRITING RSHM HISTORY: A SHARED ADVENTURE

by Kathleen Connell, RSHM

KINGSTON, ENGLAND. I have always liked this quotation by Winston Churchill: "Writing a book is an adventure. To begin with, it is a toy and an amusement. Then it becomes a mistress, then it becomes a master, then it becomes a tyrant. The last phase is that just as you are about to be reconciled to your servitude, you kill the monster and fling him to the public."

I am very happy to announce that the fourth (and last) volume of the series *A Journey in Faith and Time* is on its way to the publisher here in England. It was begun by Rosa do Carmo Sampaio in the 1990s and she had completed a rough draft of the early chapters

when she died in 1998. Since then, many sisters carefully helped to salvage Rosa's handwritten, Portuguese draft: to decipher it, verify it, reshape it and, thanks to Veronica Brand, to translate it. In the end, it came to me to rework and complete the volume, perhaps because I had worked with Rosa do Carmo on the history of the community for so many years. So for me, it is not so much a case of "Killing the monster and flinging it to the public," but the completion of a labor of love, a gift to the Institute from Rosa and me.

The central character in this book is M. St. Felix Maynard as she begins a second twelve-year

term as general superior, now without the guiding presence of the founder. This presented enormous challenges: How could she remain rigorously faithful to his every teaching and move the Institute forward at the same time? How could she keep the growing Institute united without succumbing to uniformity? Would Gailhac's charisma continue to be a source of energy and light as the congregation faced new challenges, in new places?

And always in the background was the Cross, and the unrelenting, anti-clerical persecution in France and Portugal that led to oppressive legislation and taxes, confiscation

(continued on page 4)

ABOUT JESUS OF NAZARETH: WHAT HE WANTED, WHO HE WAS

by Teresita Fay, RSHM

BROOKLYN, NY. Our Theology Study group is currently reading and discussing *Jesus of Nazareth: What He Wanted, Who He Was* by Gerhard Lohfink. The author's writing style mirrors the qualities he ascribes to Jesus: keen observation, inventive interpretation, concrete word usage, and insightful teaching. These shake readers awake to hear, see, and experience "What [Jesus] Wanted, Who He Was."

What did Jesus want but to radically obey his father's plan: the eschatological gathering of Israel, its repentance, purification, and salvation, knowing full well that redemption of his people involved suffering -- the Cross.

Who Jesus was: the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith, "the presence of God in the world," an Israelite, steeped in the tradition of his people, knowledgeable of the Old Testament, interpreting and radically transforming the Torah according to his father's will, and creating a new covenant.



Resonating throughout the narrative are the message and tone of urgency, compelling readers to become part of the world of Jesus' time and place, to listen to him proclaim the oneness of the reign of God and to be one with the people. We are asked to believe in, accept, and respond to the proclamation immediately and unconditionally, realizing that it is God's invitation to salvation and knowing that it

involves following Jesus in his suffering, death, and resurrection. Jesus' demand is to act NOW.

Central to the book is Lohfink's interpretation of Jesus' parables which reflect his teachings and exhortations. They especially demonstrate how he lived and acted, spreading blessings and "having power over demons"; how he defined and practiced love as effectively helping the poor, the oppressed, and the afflicted; how he demanded faith in those who begged for healing as well as immediate and unconditional readiness in those he called to follow him.

A motif running through the book is that of the nearness and oneness of the reign of God. It is captured in the parable of the seed growing silently and steadily until harvest: "last time," end time, judgement time, as well as "in the meantime" {W.H. Auden} -- our time. Conscious of God's closeness, those living in his reign experience momentary glimpses of Kairos (holy time) during Kronos (clock time).

(continued on page 4)

A PIECE OF A BIGGER SOUL

by Ursula Mahoney

RIVERDALE, NY. When asked to write on the theme *Book Alert*, I thought what that might mean. Was it a moment when the people on your subway car were all studying their i-phones but then one was reading a book? Even on a kindle?

Ah but reading books is not a lost art. At Hunter College I started an alumni book club fourteen years ago and we meet nine times a year. A lot of the time I select books that I think would make a good discussion or that might be important for one reason or another. I gratefully accept suggestions from members of the group. Last fall I listed a book called *The Gift of Rain* by Tan Twan Eng, a beautifully written book about a young man growing up in the Malay peninsula prior to WW II. I wasn't sure that the group would like it, but all fifteen of them did and the discussion was great.

Another time I suggested a book by Truman Capote and they loved that, particularly one woman who had read mostly non-fiction and had never realized how beautiful fiction-writing could be.

Last summer I suggested reading Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath* since global warming was giving us



a new Dust Bowl, people were finding jobs disappearing, and unions were being bashed for wanting things like better pensions. I had read the book in college and Steinbeck is terrific; but this reading called my attention to another factor in the book that had not registered with me before. The man who traveled with the Joad family, Jim Casy, had been a preacher. He had given it up, thinking who was he to preach to people and tell

them what was right. However, the way he pitched in and lived his life on the journey west was its own form of preaching. I hadn't remembered him in the book when I first read it years ago. But in the end Tom Joad has learned from the preacher what being responsible for one another means. He says, "Well, maybe like Casy says, a fella ain't got a soul of his own, but only a piece of a bigger one."

The book made a beautiful case for people helping each other and sharing what little they had. The aspect of being without a home or leaving a familiar place was also something to think about. The people who lost their homes in Superstorm Sandy could identify with the Joad family.

I think books can mean different things to us at different times. Sometimes a reread of a book can mean something different now than it did at another point in life.

There is a bumper sticker on one of the cars parked up at Marymount that shares the message of St. Francis of Assisi, "Preach the gospel. Use words if necessary." The book reminded me how important that is. ♦

ABOUT JESUS cont. from pg.3

Lohfink's final chapters celebrate the fulfillment of the subtitle of the book. Through the enlightening of the Holy Spirit, sent by the Father, Jesus' community of disciples is reminded of all that Jesus had done and taught them. They go forth into the world and tirelessly continue to do what Jesus wanted and to be who Jesus was for the people of the reign of God. ♦

NEXT ISSUE:
A LITTLE GOES
A LONG WAY



EDITORS: Cecilia Brizuela
Bea McMahon, RSHM
Pierre Dullaghan, RSHM
Ellen Marie Keane, RSHM
Cathrine Chitali, RSHM
Denise Osterhaus, RSHM
Monica Walsh, RSHM
Mary Alice Young, RSHM

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

www.rshm.org; www.rshm-nep.org;
province@rshmeap.org

WRITING cont. from pg. 3

of RSHM properties, and exile. My gratitude and awe go out to M. St. Felix, the diminutive yet indomitable RSHM who led us through this period.

Although this history project was intended to focus only on the first three general superiors who were also members of the founding community, I decided to add a second part to the book and introduce M. Ste Constance Farret, our fourth general superior (1905-1926) who might otherwise remain unknown to us and uncelebrated. This delayed the completion of the book but it seemed worth it. I hope you will agree when you meet this wonderful woman. ♦

LIBRARIES: PALACES FOR THE PEOPLE

by Richard Marie Beck, RSHM

TARRYTOWN, NY. One night recently, finding no book beside my bed, I experienced all the anguish of Dustin Hoffman's character in "Rain Man." I was **bookless**. If you are a reader you will understand this situation perfectly; no doubt you read the back of a soup can if there is nothing else to hand. If you revise and improve upon Campbell's text, you may be a writer as well, but that's another story.

I was five years old when our family moved next door to a branch of the New York Public Library. Sixty-five years later, I got a part-time job at Warner Library here in Tarrytown. So, I'd like to reflect a bit on libraries. Generations of immigrants found them a springboard to better education and a better life. They helped make dreams come true in the past and are prepared to continue that mission. We owe a nod of thanks to those like Andrew Carnegie and the Warner family who built these "palaces for the people." (And don't you just love it that the most beautiful room in Downton Abbey is the library?)

Libraries meet many needs, from the most utilitarian to the purely aesthetic. Do you have a minor plumbing problem? Are you in need of some psychological insight, some biographical data, some sense of how to find your place in the universe? Go to the library. Thanks to



Donna Leon, I believe I could navigate the canals of Venice more easily than the streets of Brooklyn. Books illumine the mind; they also can set fire to the heart. I vividly recall the jolt to my own heart when I first encountered Teilhard de Chardin's *Le Milieu Divin*. Books inspire, humanize, make us laugh and, in rare instances, bring us to tears. They become old friends. I think re-reading a favorite book is comparable to enjoying great music. Imagine listening only once to a Mozart symphony! When "bookless" I root around in a closet for a battered old copy of anything by Jane Austen (or John Le Carre, or Donald Westlake) and delight for a second or third time in their artistry.

I admit I favor British authors. After all, they have been speaking

the language a lot longer than we have, and practice should make perfect. Trying new authors can be surprisingly rewarding. It introduced me to eleven year-old Flavia in Alan Bradley's series and the latest installment is now waiting for me at the library. I'm all for technology when it serves a useful purpose, and I find it wonderful that I can request a book from home, via computer, and eventually one of the thirty-six libraries in our county-wide system sends a copy to Tarrytown with my name on it! Our library also delivers books to the homebound, conducts food and clothing drives for the needy, sponsors ESL classes, lectures, movies, art exhibits, and blood drives. So, please, do what you can to support your local library.♦

ELEGANCE cont. from pg. 2

and culture and initiates a friendship that includes Paloma. Ultimately, their friendship brings forth love, healing, and a deep appreciation of life.

The chapters of the book are written in the voices of Paloma and Renée, revealing their experiences and learnings. The strongest voice is from Renée, especially in the tragic and deeply touching conclusion of the book. From my point of view, not a word of this book is to be missed and every word treasured!♦

CONTRIBUTORS

Richard Marie Beck, RSHM is retired in Tarrytown, NY where she has recently worked in the Warner Library. She is a valued liaison to the library for the Sisters at Marymount Convent.

Kathleen Connell, RSHM is a member of the Marymount, Kingston community while researching material on RSHM history.

Ethna Egan, RSHM teaches sacramental preparation classes at Marymount International School Paris.

Teresita Fay, RSHM lives in Brooklyn, NY, dividing her time among writing projects, service on RSHM Boards of Trustees, and facilitation of parish study groups.

Cathy Garcia, RSHM teaches English classes at South Central Los Angeles Ministry Project (LAMP) in Los Angeles, California.

Edith Hart, RSHM is a conservator of works of art on paper. Her studio is in Tarrytown, NY.

Ursula Mahoney, SHM Extended Family, lives in Riverdale, NY. She is a retired photographer for The New York Times.

Catherine Vincie, RSHM is professor of Liturgical and Sacramental Theology at the Aquinas Institute in St. Louis, Missouri.

THE WRITING LIFE AND THE NEW COSMOLOGY

by Catherine Vincie, RSHM

ST. LOUIS, MO. As a liturgical theologian my ministry includes writing on a regular basis. I have written books/articles on the eucharist, the liturgy of the hours, liturgy and justice, preaching, the RCIA, and sundry other topics within the field of liturgy and worship. It was with some surprise that after the last General Chapter I was asked to join a WAP/EAP team to create a plan of study for both provinces on the new cosmology. At the time I didn't know anything about the new cosmology, but if there is anything I do know how to do, it is to read and research a topic. Lest I embarrass myself through my ignorance, I plunged into a reading program on the new cosmology, familiarizing myself with the writings of Thomas Berry, Michael Dowd, Brian Swimme, among others. I found it exciting material, and was happy to help our community join so many other women's congregations that were engaging this topic. It seemed it was THE topic for our age.

In 2011 I found myself Vice President of the North American Academy of Liturgy with the task of giving the Academy's main address for our yearly convention. While women's congregations were at the



forefront of pressing the agenda of the new cosmology in the RC Church, I found my colleagues in liturgy were far from the front lines in integrating this new material into our worship practices. While I was not an expert on the topic, the least I could do was to encourage the Academy to take on this project and begin doing it myself.

Since that time, I have become aware that it is not enough to look at the new cosmology and the liturgical implications without any other intervening steps. Ra-

ther, the whole theological tradition of the Roman Catholic Church needs to be rethought. So in the Spring semester of 2013 I took up the task of learning if and what systematic theologians were doing in this area. I was delighted to find that John Haught, Denis Edwards, Ilia Delio, Elizabeth Johnson, Arthur Peacocke, and many others were exploring what the new cosmology meant for traditional topics of creation, Christology, Trinity, and the Holy Spirit.

My writing project was to bring these theologians' work to the attention of my colleagues in liturgical studies and to begin thinking about what the implications of this material might be for our worship traditions. My new book, *Praying with the New Cosmology* (or something close to that title) is a beginning effort to rethink sacraments, sacramental theology and what prayers like the Eucharistic Prayer might look like with this new sensitivity. Many more of us need to take up the project, but it is a start and I look forward to our community's participation in this next phase of integrating the new cosmology with our faith tradition (See the General Chapter mandate for 2013). The book should be out in the Spring or Summer.♦

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Religions of the Sacred Heart of Mary
50 Wilison Park Drive
Tarrytown, New York 10591



Non-Profit Org
U.S. Postage
PAID
White Plains, NY
Permit No. 5432