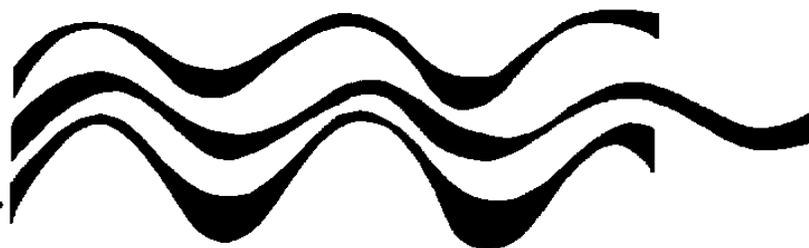


RSHM SOUNDINGS is a quarterly publication of the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary, Eastern and Western American and Northern European Provinces, and Zambezi Region. Waves sent out, reflected back, reveal an inner reality not always evident on the surface. Thus SOUNDINGS probes RSHM life in expanding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

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Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary
English Speaking Provinces

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FOR THE FIRST TIME: VOWS CELEBRATED IN MEXICAN HOME VILLAGES

by Anna Maria (St. Matthew) Lionetti, RSHM

BRONX, NY. If each of us looks back at our lives we will certainly come up with a lengthy list of first time events: the first two-wheel bicycle ride; our first big achievement in school; a first date or the first life-changing decision.

I have recently returned from a visit to Mexico where I had the joy and privilege of participation in two first time events: the celebration of Sr. Fidelia Espin's perpetual profession in her small village of Estudiantes in the State of Morelos, and Sr. Julia Trejo's perpetual profession in her village of Canada de Flores in the State of Hidalgo. As members of the Western American Province, both sisters had been officially professed in Los Angeles on September 8, 2012.

Sr. Fidelia and Sr. Julia wanted to witness their perpetual vow commitments as Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary in their villages as a vocation promotion moment for young women who have expressed a desire to know more about religious life.

Fidelia's village is situated near the winding Amacuzac River. The small flower-decorated Chapel held only a few family members, RSHM, and some of the people of the vil-



Srs. Fidelia Espin and Julia Trejo

lage. The patio surrounding the Chapel accommodated the overflow of friends from Amacuzac, as well as the late-comers of the village.

A moment during the liturgy which deeply moved me was Fidelia's receiving the lighted candle from her Godmother, the same *Madrina* who had held the lighted candle at her Baptism, again at First Communion, and once again at Confirmation, as is customary in Mexico. After the liturgy, the celebration continued with an outdoor fiesta along the banks of the river.

Julia is from a rural area called *Canada de Flores* (Canyon of the Flowers), a name it truly deserves thanks to the flowers that grow wild in the fields, as well as cacti that

serve as demarcations where one property ends and another begins.

The people of this rural area walk distances on dirt roads to visit one another and to go to Church. The small building—*La Capilla* where Eucharist is celebrated once a month—was decorated with flower-like banners on the ceiling and flowers flanking the altar area, symbolizing the joy and beauty of the event. The little *Capilla* was filled to the brim with family, RSHM, friends, and young people.

One of the most exhilarating moments was the entrance procession led by Julia, arm in arm with her mother and father, sustaining each other as the young choir sang *Juntos Cantando la Alegria* (Together Let Us Sing Joyfully). As Julia exited from the chapel, she was showered with petals of red roses. Here, also, a celebration would not have been complete without the fiesta in Julia's family home where, as is the custom, the fattened pig was lovingly prepared and served.

Both celebrations were not just moments of passing joy, but rather, history in the making in these sisters' places of birth, where they first received the seed of faith.♦

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sisters,

Recently I received a copy of RSHM *Soundings*. I always find them inspirational reading. They also bring me back to my four beautiful years at Marymount College, Tarrytown (Class of 1945).

On December 7, 1941, we weekenders were "down the hill" attending a movie. It was, as I recall, Mother Regina who stopped the movie to announce that Japan had just bombed our naval holdings in Honolulu. Soon we were at war!

The next four years were trying ones, but our devotion to our Blessed Mother, our very caring nuns, and our academic studies made those years as wartime colle-

gians stimulating and even joyful.

Recently I spent a day at Cor-maria in Sag Harbor where Sr. Ann Marino gave us a very thought-filled day of recollection. It was reminiscent of retreats at Marymount.

I was born and raised in the lovely village of Greenport. St. Agnes is my parish. From the start of my teen years, I expressed a strong desire to attend Marymount. Our Lord and my wonderful parents granted my wish. To this day I try to live by Mother Butler's motto: "*Tua Luce Dirige.*"

Very Sincerely,
Mary Gilligan
Greenport, NY

Dear RSHM,

Thanks for Sr. Brigid Murphy's writing about the lane from where she left to share the bounty of her table with the children of the world. It reminds me of the great spark I felt at a young age, and has brought me to tough and wonderful places. That spark that we felt—to change the world because of God—is something I share with you. It is our common journey. Thank you for reminding me of it. Thank you for daring to be led out of your lane.

I am grateful for my Rolling Meadows education, which has al-

ways been my favorite. Sr. Cyril taught me how to think French from the first word. You all taught me marvelously, and I am grateful. Thank you each for your lives. I am now working in hospice, and live in the inner city, which I never would have planned from my privileged suburban life.

May God continue to bless us all. The promise is, Sisters, that the best is yet to come. May we pray for that for one another.

Sharon McMullen Orlet
St. Louis, Missouri

A SIGNIFICANT FIRST AWARD

by Susan Mutale

CHIVUNA, ZAMBIA. The day I live to remember is the special day I got an Award for the first time, especially being the first born in my family. When I reached school from home, I decided to check on my results for the end of term examinations. I found that I got fourteen points, a position among the grade tens at school. I was also told that I would get an award. I was filled with joy. I felt that finally, my time had come. I used to admire my friends who got awards at St. Joseph's Secondary School managed by Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Mary. One day I

said to myself, I can do it, and I did.

The day arrived. We first had Mass with our Chaplain and then after lunch we had the awards presentation in the School hall. When my name was called, I was so scared to stand up but then I said, "It's now or never". I got up in front of the whole school and staff and walked to get my certificate of academic excellency. This has helped me be determined to study hard and aim for a bright future. That was a memory I will live to remember. ♦

LIFE BEFORE MAPQUEST

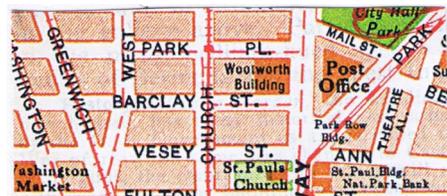
by Anne Considine, RSHM

NEW YORK, NY Our lives are full of many firsts. In thinking through the numerous firsts in my life, my mind went back to a day in the mid-fifties at the Thomas Aquinas Community on Daly Avenue. Mother Majella commissioned Mother de la Salette (Eveline) and me to go down to Barclay Street in Lower Manhattan, with a chalice that needed refinishing. We set out for the EL at E. 177 Street and Southern Boulevard, in our black traveling habits, with a set of directions and enough money to get a little lost.

Back in those days, our travel was limited mainly to a weekly journey to Marymount Manhattan College for Saturday classes. Not being city dwellers, our venture was almost akin to going to outer space. Nevertheless, we reached the religious store in Barclay Street without any trouble. On leaving the store we walked out onto a street that was crowded with people going in all different directions. Unlike us, they seemed to know exactly where they were going. Some kind person came to our rescue and we made our way back to the safety of the Bronx.

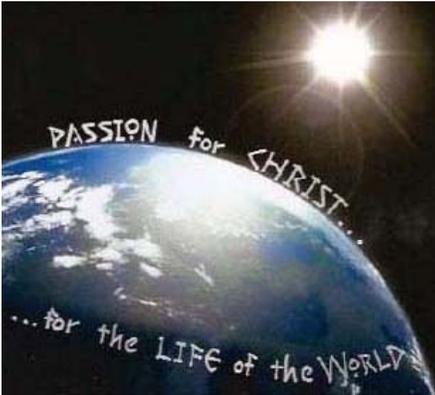
Reading subway or bus maps and navigating the streets and subways of the city has become easier over time. There was always a map, and now there is the Internet, not only for maps and travel directions but also to an unending encyclopedia of information, art, and music.

Our lives are full of firsts—many fondly remembered, others better forgotten. We have grown and learned much from these firsts and owe debts of gratitude to God and to the many people who have helped us in our journey through life. ♦



HISTORIC EXPANSION OF PRESENCE AT RSHM CHAPTERS

Each Province of the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary came together in Chapter during this year of preparation for the General Chapter to be held in Brazil in June, 2013. The following are reflections by Extended Family members on their first participation in an RSHM Chapter.



EASTERN AMERICAN PROVINCE

by Cathy Callender

NEW YORK, NY . Tuesday, August 14, 2012, was a groundbreaking day for the RSHM and for those of us invited to attend the Mission and Ministry day of the Eastern American Province Chapter held in Tarrytown, NY. This was the first time those outside the religious community had been invited to participate, and we felt honored, though not sure what to expect.

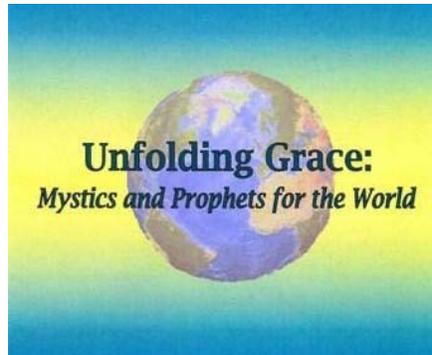
The group was quite large, approximately 160 people. We were seated at round tables with RSHM and individuals from the various ministries. What we found most enlightening was the broad scope of work of the RSHM. We appreciated learning what is being done in various parts of the province, conveyed through displays, with those in each area explaining their work.

We discussed the very important matter of preserving the mission of the religious community and how we who partner with the RSHM might contribute to this challenge. The Extended Family is a concept that we are anxious to embrace.

In asking my colleagues who also attended the day for their thoughts, we were all struck by the hospitality we experienced. "It was lovely to be in a non-materialistic world for a day, and with those who epitomize all that is good in humans." Another noted how a reli-

gious congregation of fewer than 1000 women is running a "world class, world wide institution." The RSHM are advocates for the poor and disenfranchised, with social justice at the core of their mission. Much of what is accomplished is done quietly and effectively.

Those of us attending from Marymount School of New York felt very special, and those of us who are alumnae realized yet again how privileged we are to have been educated by these remarkable women, and how critical it is that generations to come have that same special blessing. We hope that, in turn, our presence contributed to the success of the day.♦



WESTERN AMERICAN PROVINCE

by Patrick Lynch

LOS ANGELES, CA . It was unusual to be invited to the 2012 Chapter for the RSHM Western American Province. One might have thought that being an altar server as a youth prepared me for such an honor. But the Chapter experience opened a new understanding for me of what it means to be church and to be a community.

Prior to the Chapter, our process involved meeting in small circles over several months. I joined Mary Genino, Cathy Garcia, Alice Molino, and Cathy Minhoto on the core committee. I was amazed that I would become part of Sacred Circle conversations which were preparations for the final three days of

Chapter.

The whole group finally gathered at the beginning of September at the province house. Attending with me were Extended Family Board members Jennifer Scott, Kathy Lindell, and Bill Klein. It became extremely clear to us that these women had been doing this for a long, long time. The depth of their ability to listen to one another and to the Spirit shook me wonderfully to the core. Now, however, I felt I heard God's voice shouting through the communal voices of the RSHM community.

An understanding of the past several years, the present, and a vision for the future formed the foundation to finalize a Chapter statement and a basis to select delegates to the General Chapter.

When those nominated gathered in a circle, what spoke out was their humility and openness. Each woman offered herself to serve her community; for a lay person to see such willingness and readiness provided a very profound experience. It emanated from lives of service and desire to hear the word of God, witnessing exactly what the meaning of the consecrated life is: to be found ready, willing, and waiting to do the next work of God.♦



*"Hearts Burning within Us
as we Journey"*

NORTHERN EUROPEAN PROVINCE

by Kath Nolan

LIVERPOOL. . As a member of the Core Team for the Extended Family for the Northern European Province,

I attended the RSHM Provincial Chapter in October, 2012 held in Birmingham.

I first became involved with the RSHM about ten years ago when I met Sr Eleanor Dalton in my parish in Liverpool and was amazed by her enthusiasm and commitment for her work with people who have learning disabilities and asylum seekers. I became a volunteer at Seafield and at Nugent Care. This led to part time employment working with Sr Eleanor.

I was invited to attend an Extended Family meeting at Seafield Convent in Crosby Liverpool and found not only a very warm welcome, but also a great passion from all the Sisters in following their mission from Gailhac to "Give life to all". I have now attended numerous meetings and have deepened my own knowledge of the vision Gailhac had and raised my own awareness of justice issues such as trafficking and asylum seekers. Prayer is always an essential part of these meetings and I know that my own spirituality has developed, particularly when I have prepared and led the prayer myself.

The Chapter opened my eyes even further to the reality of the work of the Sisters. I was not fully aware of the wide range of ministries, and all the countries and communities they serve. Many projects include marginalised groups who have very complex problems, but the Sisters respond to God's call to "love your neighbour".

I was impressed with the very detailed finance report which showed a very realistic approach in forward planning to cover difficulties: low interest rates, costs of buildings, but more importantly the cost of caring for elderly Sisters. And despite the age profile of the members of the Province, I certainly witnessed a great energy and desire to succeed and a real love for the mission of Gailhac.♦

NEXT ISSUE:
FROM GENERATION
TO GENERATION

ONCE AND FUTURE TEACHER

by Kathleen (James) Hamilton, RSHM

LIVERPOOL,. Way back in the middle ages, when I arrived in Seafield, Liverpool, as a young nun—a raw recruit from Ferrybank Novitiate—it was mid-June and the school year was still in progress. One fine day a teacher was indisposed, and to my horror, I was asked to replace her for the day, looking after a class of boys ranging from five to eight years of age. With anxious and reluctant steps I made my way over to the Junior School on site.

Quivering in my shoes, I entered the classroom and was greeted with a clamorous "Good morning, Sister". On enquiring what they usually did first thing in the morning, a group of about six hastily made a dive for the cupboard, and having upset the neat and tidy arrangement there by scattering the contents in all directions, they presented me with a story book, and instructed me to read to them. Quite dazed, methought: "Anything for a quiet life!" and agreed to obey orders, but first, patiently waited for everyone to be seated in silence before I began.

After about half an hour, a well-meaning Sister from another class came in to inform me that *they* should be reading to me. Humbled and embarrassed, I sheepishly asked them to take out their books. Well, it was as if I had given the whistle for the start of a wrestling match. All together, they noisily clambered out of their desks and pushed their way up to "hear me sister". I was nearly demented with the tumultuous din above which my faltering voice could not be heard appealing to them to "sit down and be quiet, please"! What a welcome relief when the morning-break-bell rang out!

Away to the yard for a little recreation after such strenuous studying! This lasted for ten minutes, and in that short time three different casualties needed first aid administered, as a result of "Cowboys and Indians" on the playground. Back to

the classroom then—wrongly presuming that they had let off all their steam and spent their surplus energy.

The task I set them was to trace and cut out little figures from their drawing books and paste them on to their own individual work-sheet, thus telling a story in pictures. All went—not well—but quietly until, to my consternation, I discovered that Gerald had nipped chunks off the back of Jim's hair with the scissors I had given him!

The chapter of accidents was not yet complete. In the afternoon, I brought them to the hall to listen to a children's programme on the radio. (Television was not yet invented in those days of yore!) No way, could I get them to form an orderly line and file in as any well-disciplined class would do, so they roughly pushed and shoved their way to their preferred seats. During this onslaught, a flower-pot in a precious china container was knocked off the table and smashed into smithereens.

I was simply stunned for the remainder of the day, and just anything could have happened. To cut a long story short, that was my initiation to teaching—surely a Baptism by fire!!

To this day, I cannot fathom how I could then have been deemed "suitable material" for a teaching career, and sent off to training college! The mind boggles.♦



ENCOUNTERS WITH A TURKEY

by Mary Alice (Quentin) Young, RSHM

ELMSFORD, NY. My father called me at college. My mother was in the hospital. Could I come home early (Tuesday night) to fix Thanksgiving Dinner, turkey included?

I had watched my mother cook a turkey many times. It couldn't be that difficult, could it?

In our house, turkey was always cooked—with stuffing inside—the day before it was eaten. I set out to the store and discovered that the only turkeys available the day before Thanksgiving were FROZEN! I had read somewhere that one could defrost a turkey in water. For several hours, I poured hot water over my new found friend in the sink.

Next the stuffing. Following the family recipe, I easily doctored the Pepperidge Farm Mix (probably the

last packages in the grocery store that morning). But how to get it inside the turkey?

I phoned a neighbor. She told me to use a long handled spoon. After much frustration, finally using my two bare hands, most of it was in the cavity. The rest decorated the kitchen walls.

More calls. "How hot should the oven be? How do I know it's done?"

Finally at 8:30 that night, one last phone call. "I just took 'Junior' out of the oven. What do I do now?" I am still following her directions for lumpless gravy.

Since that day I cooked many turkeys without a hitch. That is, until I tried Christmas dinner in Rome for 12, including visitors.

The first challenge: the turkey.

Romans usually buy turkey already sliced, scaloppini style. Luckily one of our sisters had a pass to the Vatican City store that catered to non-Italians and sold whole turkeys.

Looking in our freezer, which was about the size of a 12" TV, I found a tiny package. I read the label. I mentally converted kgs to lbs. I took the frozen bird upstairs. I weighed myself with and without the turkey. Everything I did told me that it did indeed weigh LESS than 8 lbs.

Next challenge: the stuffing. Of course there was no mix. But we did have pounds of stale bread. With a lot of doctoring and help from the visitors, eventually we had stuffing.

Like the loaves and the fishes there was plenty for all, but with this meal there were no leftovers.♦

FIRST THINGS OF LONG AGO

by Jacqueline (Xavier) Murphy, RSHM

ARLINGTON, VA. It was *Billet Doux* day in August of 1960 and an overseas assignment was in store for me—to Southern Rhodesia, Africa. I had to look up the name in an atlas. We didn't have "Google" in the 60's.

First thing: Leaving New York and my homeland on the very night of President Jack Kennedy's election. It was snowing in New York and we pushed the snow all the way ahead of us to Rome. For the Romans, this was a first—an early snow. It made headlines there.

...the first RSHM (USA) to travel by jet the whole way in two segments; one to Rome and then to Salisbury. In Rome, Mother Majella O'Brien and I had a stay over which included an audience with the Holy Father, John XXIII. I was so impressed by him, his short stature, his language capacity, his presence, his simplicity, his humanity *and* the reminder to each of us: the coif needs to be more modern.

...then, crossing the equator a few nights later, arriving in Nairobi, Ken-

ya, at 2 a.m. and being welcomed to 100+ degrees of heat and humidity. ...finally arriving in Salisbury the next morning in the hot, rainy season. But it was not 100+ degrees. The savanna plain helped that. Then, Umtali. It was cooler, but wet.

My years there had other firsts: ...removed from my American and very white culture. I was in the midst of an African and British culture. I was now the minority and discovered that the values of another culture were as special as those of my homeland.

...my first Church Council, known as Vatican II, whose half century we celebrate this year. It was a very new look at both Christian and non-Christian spirituality, at Eastern faith traditions. It was the growth and living of ecumenism, all of us seeking points of unity and all dedicated to peace. Such a great opening of the doors. The *aggiornamento* goal of Pope John XXIII became very personal for me.



...teaching in the British system of education. I had a brief introduction to another educational system in my short time in Quebec, but now I was part of it. I was teaching in a style new to me and in a highly competitive and challenging system. I loved the approach to teaching Latin, so invigorating. Latin was alive!

Writing this article has given me a chance to look back over growth-filled times that had and continue to have a great impact on my life. In my current ministry of health care and hospice I meet and work with people of faith traditions very different from mine. We mesh easily and I realize that my openness to them started way back in the mid-sixties. For this gift I am forever grateful.♦

FIRST MONTHS AS A U.N. INSIDER

by Veronica Brand, RSHM

YONKERS, NY. Crossing 1st Avenue in Manhattan yesterday, to the chant of a thousand Tibetans calling on world leaders and the UN to act, I realized how many "first times" I have experienced during these last 88 days! I have been doing an internship at the UN, working with Sr. Brigid Driscoll at our RSHM NGO office. Within a few days of the opening of the General Assembly Brigid obtained my UN pass. This unlocked the door to a number of UN events. Going through security, I felt as though I was embarking on a challenging journey into the world of advocacy—preparing for take-off!

One of many learnings has been the richness of working closely with other religious congregations, faith-based organizations, and international NGOs. As RSHM we are involved in the NGO Committee to Stop Trafficking in Persons, the Working Group on Girls, and the Sub-Committee on Poverty Eradication. One memorable "first time" was the celebration of the newly inaugurated *International Day of the Girl Child* which included the moving testimony of "girl advocates" from Indonesia and Niger, and the rousing cry of Desmond Tutu, a member of the panel calling for the ending of child marriage. Some weeks later I joined Sr. Patricia

Hanvey, IBVM, from Zambia and also "interning" at the UN, to meet with senior staff at the Zambian Mission to share some concerns about the "girl child", education and gender based violence in Zambia. Another "first time"!♦



Sr. Veronica with Patricia Hanvey, IBVM



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.rshmeap.org;
province@rshmeap.org

Our prayers are with the family of Al Scongá who died recently. Al founded Commerce Press which prints *Soundings*.

CONTRIBUTORS

Veronica Brand, RSHM, currently Treasurer of the RSHM Zambezi Region, will return to NY as the RSHM NGO representative in early 2013.
Cathy Callender, MSNYC '60, is Director of Development at Marymount School of New York and a member of the Extended Family Core Group in the Eastern American Province.
Anne Considine, RSHM, teaches at Marymount School of New York.
Kathleen Hamilton, RSHM, does pastoral and music ministry in parishes in Liverpool, England.
Anna Maria Lionetti, RSHM, is Co-Director of Vocation Promotion for the Eastern American Province.
Patrick Lynch is an Extended Family Board Member in the Western American Province.
Jacqueline Murphy, RSHM, lives in Marymount Convent, Arlington, and works with Montgomery Hospice in Maryland.
Susan Mutale is a 14 year old boarding student in an English Language class at St. Joseph's High School, Chivuna, Zambia. Her teacher is Cathrine Chitali, RSHM.
Kath Nolan is an Extended Family Board Member in the Northern European Province.
Mary Alice Young, RSHM, is Director of Advancement for the Eastern American Province.

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