

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

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Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary  
English Speaking Provinces

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## TRANSFORM THESE STONES

by Rosemary Mwangarezano, RSHM

BELO HORIZONTE, BRAZIL My name is Rosemary and I am an RSHM from Zimbabwe. The name Zimbabwe means "Great House of Stone."

I am very happy to present to you a story about stones because it is really a story about me. I was born and bred in the Eastern Highlands, near the city of Mutare. This is one of the most beautiful areas in Zimbabwe. Driving through a splendid mountain area called "Christmas Pass," whether in a car or by train, one can see how the engineers transformed those mountains of stone into pathways which help us to get from one region to the next.

In Masvingo, formerly known as Fort Victoria, we have the ruins of The Great Zimbabwe. The elders transformed the stones into a lovely village with beautiful huts and fortified walls. The walls were made out of stones alone, without mortar or cement, and they were placed on top of each other in such a way that one is forced to stop and praise God in amazement at what our forefathers were able to accomplish centuries ago with so little. Inside these lovely stone walls young people and older ones too, make all kinds of beautiful stone sculptures transforming stones into tools used by men for



hunting and by women for various needs in the home. These talented sculptors carve the stones to portray different themes and messages.

These small groups of stone sculptors can be found in many places throughout Zimbabwe. In the capital, Harare, the most famous group is found in a place called Chapungu. People come from all over the world to see these sculptors transforming mainly soapstone into beautiful birds, animals and people. The tools used are very simple, for example: chisel, chasing

hammer and rasp. The shiny surfaces are sanded, waxed and polished. The matt white contrasting textures are created using these tools. The lines in the stone are natural veins. The magnificent end products are sold to the few tourists who still come but the local people can only afford to admire them. Sculptors usually work in groups helping and encouraging one another. At the end of the day they are not only transforming the stones but they are transforming their lives by the way they share, help and support each other.

(continued on page 4)

# BUILDING CONNECTIONS

by Susan M. Kumnick

*At the RSHM Network of Schools meeting in June 2015, Sr. Anne Marie Hill was recognized for her vital work for the Network since its inception. Susan M. Kumnick, Director of Marymount Barranquilla, presented part of the tribute. The following is her reflection.*

The RSHM schools in Colombia will always be grateful to Sister Anne Marie Hill. As director of the RSHM Network of Schools for many years, Sister Anne Marie became our “Colombian connection”—in a good way!

To appreciate the level of gratitude in the Colombian schools for this amazing woman, it is necessary to understand our history. With the withdrawal of the RSHM Congregation from Colombia in the 1980’s, newly formed boards of parents and graduates assumed the daunting task of transitioning to lay leadership in each of our schools. This was marked by the underlying concern of how these lay leaders would sustain Marymount’s standards of formation without the sisters. The lay boards and administrators grew in knowledge, ability, and experience. But, as the years passed, the schools grew farther and farther apart from each other.

Then the head of Marymount Medellin, Ana Maria Bernal, learned about the Network of RSHM Schools in Europe led by Sister Anne Marie Hill. When she requested and received permission for the schools in Colombia to attend the Network meetings, first Medellin in 2005, then Bogota in 2006, and finally Barranquilla in 2007 sent their administrators.

The 2007 meeting, hosted by Marymount New York with a visit to Tarrytown, was not only a homecoming, but also a healing reconnection of the schools in Colombia to the RSHM. It was my first encounter with Sister Anne Marie, a formi-



Sr. Anne Marie Hill

dable presence. In her determined and competent way, she was clearly in her element as the Network’s leader, one who understood and supported the different roles and needs of each member of an RSHM school. During work sessions, we noticed that she only sat in groups containing Colombian representatives and rarely smiled, (or so it seemed to us). We suspected we were being checked out to see if we really belonged at the Network meetings.

We must have met the criteria because, in February of 2010, Sister Anne Marie accepted our invitation to visit the schools in Colombia where she discovered that the RSHM Mission, spirit, and tradition were alive and well. There are no words to describe what it meant to each of our communities to have this representative of the RSHM Congregation present on our campuses after so many years. Her gentle smile (very much in evidence during the visit), warm rapport with people of all ages and cultures, and words of praise on behalf of the RSHM touched our hearts. This blessing of reconnection was further multiplied in 2013 when the Colombian schools, guided by Sister Anne Marie, hosted the Network meeting

in Medellin.

Through years of selfless service, leadership, and friendship, Sister Anne Marie Hill has successfully linked our schools—reconnecting us to each other as well as to the schools and missions founded by the RSHM around the world, to Béziers, the Founders, and the inspirational history of the RSHM, to cherished RSHM sisters from our past and new friends we have met at the meetings, and to the transformational vocation of the RSHM style of education to which we lay people have been called. Sister Anne Marie Hill opened her heart and the Network to us. We thank God for her and for the RSHM.♦

NEXT ISSUE:  
THE MUSTARD SEED

# STONES, HOLDERS OF MEMORIES

By Barbara Bailey, RSHM

LIVERPOOL I am on an overnight sleeper train from Paris to Rome with my dear friend Bea. As dawn breaks we see the sparkling blue Mediterranean and then, on our left, the ticket collector informs us, we will glimpse the great cliffs that are the edge of the Carrara quarries from which Michaelangelo took his stone. During the following weeks we were able to see some of the forms that the genius of Michelangelo had released from this stone : from the pure form of David, the immense power of Moses and the four Prisoners (unfinished) where it seems the stone is only slowly revealing the figures within it.

In the UK and Ireland our landscapes are filled with stones transformed by the imagination and skill of humans from ancient times. There are stone walls, chapels, hermitages and dwellings and then those that stand as guardians of sacred places such as Stonehenge, New Grange and numerous places on the west coasts of Ireland and Scotland.

Many of the ancient labyrinths were formed by using stones to mark out the path that leads to the centre of these sacred spaces. In our Labyrinth in Noddfa the walker or pilgrim will often carry a stone as a symbol of what the walker wants to leave behind or entrust to the sacred or maybe take one away as a reminder of what they have received. The symbolic power of these

stones is strong as holders of memory—tactile, yet connecting us with our inner journey and indeed the journey of the universe.

My favourite stones continue to do this as I take each one in my hand. I am reminded of the great journey of transformation each has undergone in the evolution of the planet, volcanoes, fire, ice, being crushed, shaped and moved by water. A geologist friend amazes me with these details. When I accompany people doing the Cosmic Walk I often give them a stone, sometimes with a picture of earth and stars painted on it, and invite them to connect with the journey of their stone.

The stones with fossils, such as ammonites, are more obvious reminders. Many of my other favourite stones speak to me of special places and/or people: Sinai, Wicklow seashore, the Jurassic Coast, Seaford Beach. So when I take them up I feel connected with them and particular memories. I like to think that between myself and the stones there is some sort of mutual transforming going on. After all, they are not just pebbles on the beach.

I really don't know how I am going to handle downsizing my collection. Time to let go? Not yet.

*P.S. a word of warning: don't try telling some of the above to a Chicago customs officer who wants to know why you have a stone in your hand luggage. It doesn't help!♦*



# OUT OF THE CAVE, INTO THE LIGHT

by Ellen Marie Keane, RSHM

*(Sr. Ellen Marie Keane reflected with many philosophy classes on Plato's image of ignorance as imprisonment in a cave where only shadows can be seen, and these are mistaken for reality. It is the basis of the following excerpt from a meditation written in May 2007.)*

TARRYTOWN, NY My reflection on Plato's "Allegory of the Cave" leads to a meditation on education in general. Socrates' distinction between the wise person and the fool is easy to grasp intellectually. The wise person knows that she does not know everything; the fool thinks that she knows all. So the confession of ignorance is the first step to be taken in the journey towards wisdom. It takes more than insight, however, to leave the comfort zones we have set up around us. It often takes great courage. Skilled teachers know that there is a fine line between putting students in touch with their ignorance in such a way that they are encouraged to move out towards the light; and the danger of so discouraging them that they recoil from the struggle and choose to remain ignorant, mired in the familiar. Who of us has not felt the pain of that happening under our hands? And so, knowing well that wisdom is caught rather than taught, we continue with the struggle ourselves to model for them the joys of discovery, the thrill of learning and the lifelong search for wisdom. It has been my life during a long teaching career at Marymount College, an incredible gift and cherished blessing. In the long run, as I reflect on it, this sense of deep gratitude trumps the feelings of anger, disappointment and sadness associated with the closing of Marymount, and frees me for a future full of new and exciting possibilities.

On most evenings here on this beautiful campus facing the Hudson

(continued on page 4)

# STONES WEATHERED BY THE SEA

By Ann Thaddeus Marino, RSHM



Cormaria original house, 1907



Cormaria undergoing renovation, 2015

SAG HARBOR, NY In Sag Harbor, 1907, the Havens family had a beautiful new home built on the bay. It was the largest house in town and had a magnificent view of the harbor. It is said that Mr. Havens would open the curtains in the Tiffany Dining Room to show his guests a beautiful ‘painting’ which was actually the view of the bay. It was a summer house for the Havens, and then in 1917 it was sold to the Marshall family of Marshall Field & Company. In 1943 the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary purchased the property and established a finishing school. Then, in 1949, this beautiful place became a retreat house, and the first retreatants came for the Thanksgiving weekend that year.

Since then, thousands of people have enjoyed the same beautiful view—people of all walks of life, young and old and in between. Many of us came as high school students, campers, or for those wonderful vacations with Mother Annunciation presiding over a houseful of exuberant ‘young nuns.’ The house has expanded since those days. Now we welcome not only young nuns or the ladies from Bonwit Teller, but large groups from Twelve

Step Programs, and many other groups of priests, religious, and laity.

Cormaria was the first retreat house to welcome people with AIDS. There are many programs including couples retreats, parish retreats, and theme retreats for example “Listen to the quiet”, men and women searching for the quiet to listen to their God call them by name.

At this moment the original building is hollow, the interior gutted. We are in the midst of renovating the Beautiful Lady by the Sea. The other day I walked through the empty hallways and thought of all the prayers said here, all the tears shed, all the laughter that these halls echoed—the sacredness of Cormaria. Truly, it is holy ground and, for so many, a home away from home.

Today is a new beginning. As in the gospel parable of the house set on stone, Cormaria has withstood many storms. It has witnessed many resurrections. In Jesus Christ, the cornerstone, “the whole building is joined together, and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord” (Eph. 2:21).♦



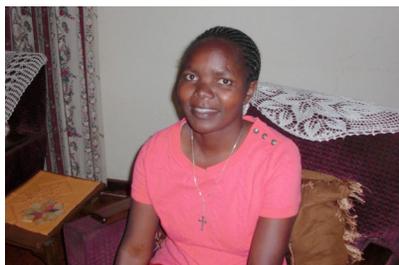
## *OUT OF THE CAVE* from page 3

River we are treated to magnificent sunsets. They take my breath away. We have now witnessed the sunset of Marymount College, where, due in part to the efforts of an excellent, dedicated, grounded faculty, receptive students have moved out of the shadows into the light, freeing themselves over time from ignorance, prejudice and fear. The setting of this particular sun was shockingly painful to be sure, but because we are a community of faith and realism, we know that the sun which fades to black will rise again in a burst of brightness to mark the beginning of another day. We trust, in fact we know, that the light that our faculty, alumnae and students carry within them will continue to bring understanding, warmth, new life – even joy – into caves everywhere.

One hundred years ago the RSHM who founded Marymount chose as the motto of the College, “Tua Luce Dirige”. Those words have been chiseled into cornices, engraved on medallions, scripted on diplomas, and imprinted on many thousands of publications. What matters now is that they are written in our hearts. “Guide us by Thy Light.”♦

## *TRANSFORM* from page 1

These stone sculptures stand like The Great Zimbabwe as monuments to the creativity and perseverance of the people of my homeland. I keep on learning more and more about the necessary transformational process which these stones have



to go through before they become what the sculptor has in mind. Is there a message here for me? Like clay in the hands of the potter so are you in my hands (Jer. 18:6). If we allow it God can transform us into the beautiful, lovely people we are meant to be.

## UPON THIS ROCK

by Maureen Kelleher, RSHM

*Maureen Kelleher, RSHM, was one of three women religious participating as nonvoting members in the Synod of Bishops, Oct. 4-25, 2015, in the Vatican. Participants had the opportunity to present a 3-minute intervention at plenary sessions. Maureen's intervention follows:*

Holy Father, brothers and sisters,

In paragraph 72 of the Synod Document we read "The Church must instill in families a sense of *WE* in which no member is forgotten. Everyone ought to be encouraged to develop their skills and accomplish their personal plan of life in service of the Kingdom of God."

I am grateful for the social encyclicals of our Church and her advocacy for immigrants and option for the poor. I am grateful for my Catholic education, for the nuns who taught me—Franciscans, Ursulines, Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Mary. They challenged me to give a life of service for the building of the Kingdom of God. As a Sister of the Sacred Heart of Mary since 1960, I serve now these past 31 years as a lawyer working for justice and the immigration needs of the migrant farm workers in south rural Florida.

I call on the Church my family to live up to the challenge to instill in our family the Church a sense of *WE*...to encourage each person, male or female, to develop their skills to serve the Kingdom of God. I ask our Church leaders to recognize

how many women who feel called to be in service of the Kingdom of God cannot find a place in our Church. Gifted though some may be, many cannot bring their talents to the tables of decision making and pastoral planning. They must go elsewhere to be of service in building the Kingdom of God.

In 1974 at the Synod on Evangelization, one of our nuns, Sister Marguerite Marie, was one of two nuns appointed from the Union of Superiors General. Today, 40 years later, we are three! I love my law practice with immigrants but find a high percent of my clients are victims of domestic violence sexual abuse, and parents of sexually abused children. I have yet to hear a homily in the wealthy or poor parishes in my area calling men to see their spouse as partner, as equal, and to stop their practices of power, domination, and violence, and to value the innocence of children.

I urge this silence to stop. Also, I urge that priests receive better pastoral formation to accompany these victims. They need to know an abusive home is no place to raise a child.

I close with congratulations for all those cardinals inspired by the Holy Spirit who gave us Pope Francis. He is such a gift. Now people of all different faiths and some with no faith who know I am a sister stop me to say, 'I love your pope!'♦



Photo: © Servizio Fotografico de L'Osservatore Romano

## A PARENT'S STORY

by Marisela Castillo



*LOS ANGELES, CA Marisela graduated from South Central LAMP (Los Angeles Ministry Project). She participated in the parenting program which helped her overcome many obstacles (stones) in her life. This is Marisela's story in her own words:*

When I arrived at SC LAMP, my way of thinking and the way I treated my kids was completely changed. Before I came, I didn't have patience, but with the parenting program, I learned that I needed to have a lot of patience. As a woman, now I can value myself more and I love who I am. With my kids, I solve any type of problem by patiently talking with them.

My son has been recognized as Student of the Year, something that he never had accomplished before. At SC LAMP we were taught how to set goals; that was our goal and we reached it. Today, I can also set foot in a library and I can speak English. Before, I would never go near a library. Now I can go to a library and ask for whatever I need, and I can defend myself wherever I go. I can also see the difference in my children and how much they've changed. And not only the children—my husband has mentioned that he's noticed the change in me, and that I helped him, too.

My self-esteem is much greater. Friends that I had in the past tell me that now I'm a happier person and more open.

(continued on page 6)

# WHEN RIVERS SING, IT IS THANKS TO THE STONES

by Anne (Walter) Walsh, RSHM

BRONX, NY “The very stones cry out...” when rivers cascade. They resound with a song of life, since rivers serve as arteries of the land. Beginning deep in the heartland, gathering from the forest and swamps, they spring from the bowels of the earth trickling, joining together, gushing to flow towards the seas. Each is different, some solemn and serious, others joyous and carefree. Rivers carry the life water of all living things. Sit by a stream and listen to its stories: tales of explorers, adventurers and travel. Strength of cities and farms, waterways carry the products of the land and the wastes of the seas. A living river, ever changing, sustains wild things. Here by the water’s edge the doe leads her fawn to sip the cool-

ness of the mountain stream. A kingfisher call rattles in the wind and flowers and ferns nod in the dappled sunlight.

A river offers an intimate relationship which never fades: big rivers where tugs push their cargoes towards some distant seaport; little rivers that fresh from the snowfields of mighty mountains, cold and rich with life, fill the reservoirs of cities and renew the sweet water lakes where the bear and otter play. Rivers inspire, and while providing sanctuary for wildlife, offer us solitude and beauty. It is inspiring indeed to sit by the riverside and watch the sun setting, the shadows lengthening, and listen to life’s song.♦



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## PARENT’S STORY from page 5

It is important to experience this program to the fullest, every day, every hour, every minute until the very last day. Thank you SC LAMP! Marisela Castillo (*Class of 2014*)

*South Central LAMP's mission is to provide a supportive, nurturing environment for economically poor women and their families.*

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