



Eastern American Province

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That all may have LIFE and have it to the full.

LAUDAUTO SI By Catherine Bennett, RSHM

On Sunday, December 13, 2016, we had the honor of having Dr. Kevin Ahern, PhD from



Manhattan College as our presenter. He spoke on the Pope's Encyclical, *Laudato Si*, and he was excellent.

In this Encyclical Pope Francis highlights the problems of the present crisis, including pollution, climate change, water issues, loss of biodiversity, links between ecological degradation and inequality, urbanization and the failure of leadership to respond effectively to this crisis. Pope Francis affirms human actions as the primary cause of the ecological crisis.

He pointed out that Pope Francis offered an overview of the Gospel of Creation and reminded us that we, created in the image and likeness of God, are special but that the rest of creation has value. He helped us to see our responsibility to save our 'Mother Earth'.

We must realize that the world is a gift which we have freely received and must share with others. The effects of the poor way we are treat *Sister Earth*, along with all the abandoned of the world, to cry out, pleading that we take another course.

Dr. Ahern's presentation touched me deeply and made me feel how very important my responsibility is, even in small ways, to do my part in caring for Mother earth, e.g. careful about the use of water, make sure I re-cycle, watch out about the various uses of energy here in the Convent etc.

It was truly a powerful reminder of my personal responsibilities as a member of this beautiful Mother Earth.



Our Mission

The SHM-EF embraces all those who desire to share in the spirit and charism of the RSHM and their founder, Jean Gailhac, and foundress, Mere Saint Jean. The RSHM treasure the friendships and associations shared with students, faculties, staffs, families and colleagues over the years. All are invited to participate in the SHM Extended Family, which embraces all who want a deeper understanding of the challenges of the Church today and the RSHM Institute's focus on justice, peace and the integrity of creation.

SACRED HEART OF MARY- EXTENDED FAMILY DAYS OF REFLECTION, PRAYER AND PLANNING – APRIL 25, 2015 AND OCT. 3, 2015

By Clare Horn

The SHM- EF Core Committee gathered in Tarrytown for two days of reflection and planning. We started our days in personal reflection which grounded us in reading and discussing documents, materials and future planning for the EF. The documents and materials included the SHM-EF booklet, RSHM Mission and Charism, Provincial Council goals from 2009-2013, the General Chapter 2004 Statement on Extended Family, and input from the RSHM. We met in small groups to discover, dream, and design our ideas. We identified our past achievements, our strengths and focused on the future.

Three themes emerged: **building relationships, communication, and ritual**. Our achievements and future planning included continuation of **building relationships** between RSHM – EF, deepening sense of belonging and support for others and self, supporting RSHM mission opportunities, programs, volunteers, and events through a variety of programs – intellectual, social, spiritual, social justice, theological;

recognizing our strengths and improving **communication** – informing of events, of who we are, receiving requests for prayers, etc., use of web page, live streaming, Facebook; acknowledge significant number of requests for prayers and remembrance. Of importance to the committee was **ritual** – enhancing relationships, developing a ritual (prayer, song, etc.) for the Core Committee, volunteers including a time and occasion of ‘Missioning’, and using ritual and a script, when we sponsor an event, identifying the ‘branding’ of the SHM-EF.

These days were life giving in building community, effective in future planning, and strengthening our commitment to be of service to the SHM-Extended Family. The EF Core Committee is dedicated to reach out embracing all those who identify with the spirit of the RSHM and who want "to share in the life-giving mission of Jesus Christ." We look forward to inviting you to events, programs and opportunities which support the RSHM mission, “That all may have life.”

Join us for future events with your Extended Family

Life Way Network Presents- Towards New Life: Walking Together Towards Freedom: May 19, 2016

Marymount College Reunion- June 2-5, 2016

SHM EF Fall Retreat: September 16-18, 2016

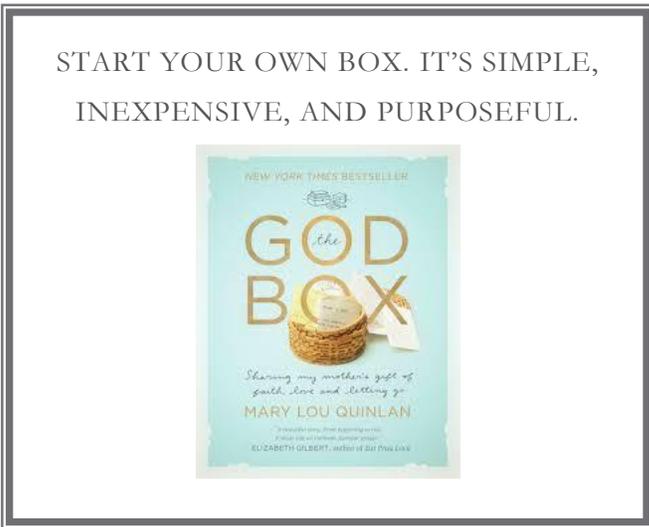
For more information on these events, go to <http://www.alumni.fordham.edu/calendar/list.aspx>

(Link can be accessed by anyone. No passwords needed.)

THE GOD BOX OPENS ITS LID TO YOUR DAILY PRAYERS

By Dotsie Ryan-Beck

The 'God Box' was introduced to us the first night of the retreat in October 2015. This is an idea that was taken from the book, The God Box, by Mary Lou Quinlan. It was explained that the purpose of the box was to write a note to God. Perhaps a prayer for someone struggling- a sick friend or family member or just for ourselves. Invariably, when you mention to anyone that you are going on retreat, people ask you to pray for them- which is



a great opportunity for the God Box.

We were then asked to place these petitions before God, in the box provided for us. Throughout the weekend the box seemed to grow as people added their prayers and petitions.

On Sunday, at the close of the retreat, Sr. Ann said that all our petitions would

be placed on the altar during the Easter Sunday Mass at Cormaria. In addition, each of us was surprised to receive her own God box to take home, and hopefully continue the practice.

VOLUNTEERS GET PHYSICALLY ACTIVE FOR WELL-BEING

By Susannah Bourbeau

We (Susannah Bourbeau- Program co-Director and volunteers Wanda Medina, Riley Duggan, and Thomas Ginch) gathered in Fruitland Park, FL October 16-18, 2015, for a weekend retreat with the Catholic Volunteers in Florida.



On Friday we heard from *Crossroads*, trainers who led us in a full day workshop on cultural competency, further deepening our understanding and need for social analysis. Friday night we shared stories around a campfire.

On Saturday, we participated in a team-building ropes course activity. We were challenged to communicate effectively to solve puzzles. We then challenged our fears and physical abilities by zip lining and climbing poles and ladders.

The weekend ended with Mass where we were all called to find our passion and use it to meet the world's needs; therein we will find our happiness.

RSHM CONVOCATION JULY 13-17, 2015

By Clare Horn

The RSHM and several members of the Extended Family gathered in Tarrytown for five days of learning, reflecting and renewing relationships.

We were welcomed the first evening by Sr. Kathleen Fagan, Provincial. This was followed by a video based on the theme *Living the Joy of the Gospel*, which showed the RSHM in their ministries across the globe. This can be viewed on YouTube - RSHM Convocation 2015.

On the first day, Lynne M. Levo, CSJ, Ph.D gave a presentation on the '**Fullness of Life**'. She called us to know ourselves, to be alert to what asks for our attention and energy. She asked us to listen to whom and where the Spirit invites us, perhaps toward people and places outside our comfort zone.

During each session there were questions for reflection and sharing such as, "How might you improve your balance and quality of life? What does the world need from you, from us?"

Lynne's presentation on '**Ageing, Spirituality and God**' invited us to live in the present which is where we encounter God. We are called to be Hope Builders, mentors of hope, being available, making time, sharing space, and being present to others.

On days three and four Frank Moloney, SDB presented on the '**Resurrection and Galilee experience**' and on '**Christ and the cosmos.**'

As people of God we gather in the love of Christ and are formed to be goodness and light in the world. The Galilee experience was one of fear and faith for the struggling disciples. Jesus tells them, "I will go before you into Galilee." In the scripture passages Fr. Moloney spoke of Luke's theme of 'journey'. He described the two disciples walking

away from Jerusalem toward Emmaus. Even though Jesus was walking to Emmaus with them their eyes were kept from recognizing him. When they sat together at the table for supper it was in the breaking of the bread that their eyes were opened and their hearts burned. Jesus then leaves them. The disciples' journey back to Jerusalem after this is the movement towards God and His saving mystery.

Christ and the cosmos – We as humans have a caring role in God's creation and are called to cooperate with God to ensure that all creation is 'good.' We are made in the image of God, made in the God's Divine Image with capacity of interpersonal relationships. We are called to develop healthy relationships with other creatures mindful we are members not masters of creation.

Many members of the SHM-Extended Family came for the session on '**Celebrating Mary in Art and Devotion**' by Judith Dupre, which explored the relationship between creativity and the search for meaning. We celebrated Mary's *Magnificat* through meditative readings and songs.

In the evening Sr. Rosamund Blanchet, General Superior, shared remarks about the Institute and thanked the outgoing provincial team, Srs. Kathleen Fagan, Margaret Ellen Flannelly and Monica Walsh for their work over the past years.

The final day opened with Mass and a celebration of the transfer of leadership. We all welcomed and blessed the new provincial team of Srs. Catherine Patten, Provincial, Monica Walsh and Catherine Vincie.

ANNUAL FALL SHM RETREAT AT CORMARIA IN SAG HARBOR

By Elaine Reiman Fenton

Soon after my husband died (a decade ago now) some kind soul gave my name to the Retreat House and I received an invitation to the SHM Extended Family Spring Retreat; I have been going ever since.



The women include graduates of the various schools where the RSHM have taught, along with others who are related to, have worked with, or in some other way have come to know, the RSHM. Most who attend this retreat are from the NY/NJ/Conn area.

The Retreat House, Cormaria, is situated on the shore in Sag Harbor, and it is a truly lovely area...and peaceful! The weekend retreat program is about what you would guess: a daily (brief) talk, a “round table” presented by attendees on a prepared topic, a few group prayer opportunities, options for a meditation hour, a social hour, and ample free time to walk the shore, the grounds, or into town, alone or with others.

The emphasis is on having a “break” from your usual routine to think about your life – your spiritual life, and your life-in-the-world.

For me, as a new widow, it was consoling; as a faithful attendee is has become sanity-saving! I look forward to going (my week-end “away), to getting outside of whatever I’m thinking or feeling and, for me, a chance to look at it all from a slight distance, maybe to consider some new options...or to let new options occur to me, in a supportive, undemanding environment.

It is also welcoming, and I look forward to it as a chance to meet the friends I now feel many of the women have become over the

years.

I imagine any woman would say she could use a “break” (even from a happy life), chance to just “be” for a while, an opportunity to consider what we are usually so run-off-our-feet busy to think about, an option for some time apart...if that idea speaks to you, be in touch with Mary Heyser RSHM at the Provincial Center, 50 Wilson Park Drive, Tarrytown, NY 10591, or by email: mpheyser@gmail.com.

Fall retreat is scheduled for September 16-18, 2016 for \$225 total, which includes light supper on Friday, breakfast, lunch and dinner on Saturday and Brunch on Sunday.

A PERSONAL REFLECTION OF FALL RETREAT AT CORMARIA

By Pat Healy

The annual SHM EF retreat in the Spring has been extended to add a Fall gathering. Last year our time at Cormaria coincided with Halloween and the celebration of All Saints Day.

On Friday evening, Sr. Mary Heyser, RSHM, Co-Chair of the Core Committee, welcomed everyone and gave a brief introduction about the Extended Family. Each one was asked to introduce herself and immediate connections began to appear in the group.

Sr. Ann Marino's opening presentation invited us to Celebrate in a Spirit of Joy, and to experience the sacred breath of the Lord in each of us. In keeping with our theme – "The Joy of the Gospel, the journey of the women continues" – Ann invited us to step outside our comfort zones, to be who we really are, much as the women at the tomb of Christ stepped outside their comfort zone to go to care for his body and then to return to the others to tell of the empty tomb. She reminded us that we are all women of the NOW testament, bearing witness in day to day.

On Saturday, Ann continued the idea of moving outside our comfort zone, deciding what it is that we can let go – prejudice, judgment, coldness of heart. She urged us to listen carefully to what God is asking of us, and also to

what we are assured: that we are loved. "I have called you by name and you are Mine."

In the afternoon, a panel spoke of three women who impacted the world around them: Thecla, who traveled with St. Paul, and was well known as a preacher; Teresa of Avila, who reformed the Spanish Carmelites and the papacy; and Apollonie Cure Pellissier who founded the RSHM with Pere Jean Gailhac in anti-clerical 19th century France.

Liturgy was celebrated in the dining room and it was a wonderful experience as we sat together around tables. We continued the celebration over wine and cheese and at dinner we were visited by Halloween creatures – Betty Flynn dressed as a wizard and

Sr. Francis of Assisi as a wayward clown. After dinner we watched a DVD - "A Vast Company of Witnesses: The Communion of Saints: telling the inspiring stories of four more women: Edith Stein, Mother Teresa, Therese of Lisieux and Katharine Drexel.

On Sunday we were reminded that we never know where we meet God and we considered the

questions: Who gives us life? To whom do we give life? After a refreshing brunch, we set off home again, continuing our journey.



EXTENDED FAMILY VISIT THE UN HEADQUARTERS

By Angelica Hinojosa

On a mild day of November 16, 2015, 18 people ventured to the Turtle Bay section of New York City to visit the Headquarters of the United Nations (UN). The afternoon started with Sr. Veronica welcoming the 18 participants to the UN Church Center located directly across from the visitor center. Sr. Veronica shared a slide presentation of the RSHM's involvement as a non-government organization (NGO) representative and how the RSHM works with the UN system.



Sr. Veronica works with the UN Economic and Social Council, which is the principal body for coordination, policy review, policy dialogue and recommendations on economic, social and environmental issues, as well as implementing internationally agreed development goals. Sr. Veronica provided information about the RSHM's support of the UN's 17 sustainable development goals that focuses on ensuring the 17 goals are attainable by all members of the world by 2030. As an RSHM NGO delegate, Sr. Veronica represents the RSHM on supporting such common goals as ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all and ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns.

The RSHM also works with side projects within the UN like the Human Right to Water and Sanitation, Human Rights to Global Change, and bringing awareness of Anti-Human Trafficking.

After lunch, the group went the UN for the guided tour throughout the 18-acre international territory located on the East River. The group walked throughout the council chambers and saw international arts and tokens of peace gifted by various countries. None of the councils were in sessions, which enabled the group to visit all of the main chambers. The guide suggested our luck in the viewing was due to it being lunch time.

Once the tour finished and all had an opportunity to visit the shops or grounds, the group reconvened at the Church Center for a prayer and reflection led by Sr. Veronica. She tied in the day's event by asking the group members to choose one of the UN's 17 sustainable development goals and make a commitment to help the cause.

For additional information please contact Veronica Brand, RSHM NGO Representative at: rshngo@gmail.com

[http://www.rshm.org/ministries/Working_for Justice](http://www.rshm.org/ministries/Working_for_Justice)

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/211617%20Goals%2017%20Partnerships.pdf>



COME JOIN AN RSHM EXTENDED FAMILY BOOK CLUB By Extended Family

Sr. Ellen Marie Keane has graciously offered to hold a monthly book club at the convent in Tarrytown.

We would like your feedback on this venture by **May 31, 2016** for we hope to start this off in June 2016.

What topics would interest you?

- We were thinking that since Pope Francis has named this The Year of Mercy we might use that as a theme for the first month, and pick a book on that topic. If you would like that we can do it.
- We would like to know though what you are interested in, so please share what are your topics or books of interest. We would really like your opinion.

What time and day would be easier for you to attend?

- Day - Saturday or Sunday
- Time - time?
- Topic - year of Mercy.
- Lunch - brown bag?

We had thought about late morning or early afternoon either Saturday or Sunday.

We would set it up depending on the majority of people attending and when it would be convenient for them.

We thought to bring a brown bag lunch that would make life easier and fun.

Please submit any suggestions you might have about date/ time /and lunch and also let us know if any of our suggestions work for you.

Please reply by May 31, 2016

If you miss the deadline, of course you can join at a later date if you so choose!

Please contact Marion McGarry at:

[203-273-3102](tel:203-273-3102) and Mcgarrysun@yahoo.com

Eastern American Province Extended Family Core Committee

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