

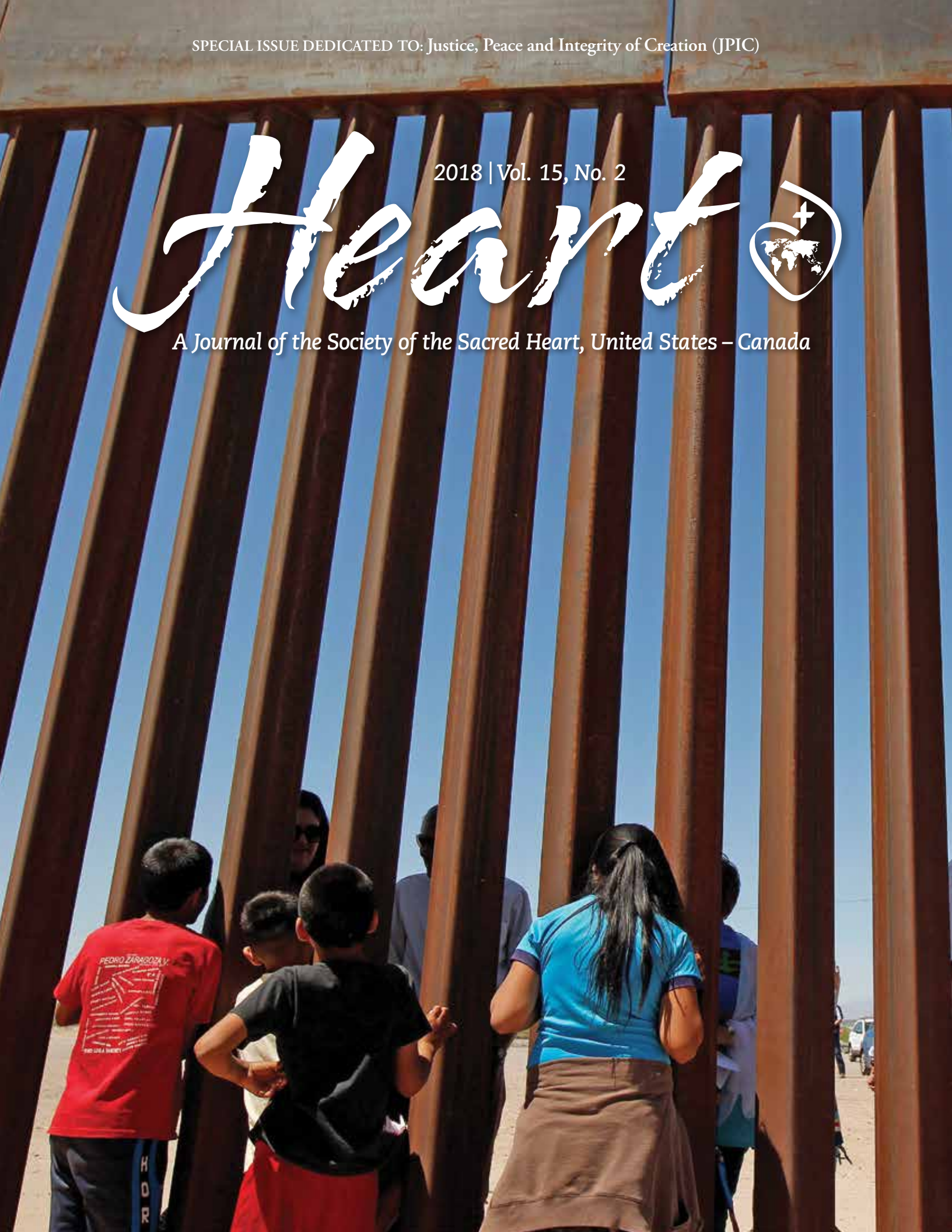
SPECIAL ISSUE DEDICATED TO: Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC)

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# Heart



*A Journal of the Society of the Sacred Heart, United States – Canada*



# ...to Heart

## Dear Friends and Family of the Sacred Heart,

Even though Saint Madeleine Sophie never used the words social justice or **justice, peace and the integrity of creation (JPIC)**, the spirituality and values that she held are the same – the importance of human dignity, right relationships, preventing inequality and respecting God’s creation.

Today, many of our JPIC efforts happen through the Stuart Center in Washington, D.C. Established in 2012, the Stuart Center fosters a more just society through educational initiatives, technology and leadership development in collaboration with social justice groups, religious and nonprofit organizations whose mission are aligned with that of the Society of the Sacred Heart.

This issue of *Heart* magazine takes a closer look at some of these initiatives, including participation in the 2018 Trail of Death Caravan with the Potawatomi and the Global Citizen Program, which brought together young adults from Puerto Rico, Mexico and the Rio Grande Valley of Texas. This issue also explores some of the ways many individual Religious of the Sacred Heart demonstrate their commitment to JPIC by engaging with issues related to youth, immigration and ecology in their daily lives.

On page 8, we share how the Religious of the Sacred Heart have committed themselves to a better understanding of racism in the world and the Society’s participation in the historic sin of slavery in the early to mid-1800s, when we arrived in the Louisiana Territory. To become more aware of our role and of ways to respond to our history, the Slavery, Accountability and Reconciliation Committee was formed to study this history, honor the memories of enslaved persons and heal relationships with their descendant families. This will be an ongoing process and a continuing conversation.

Also, I am pleased to introduce you to our new provincial leadership team. While I will continue as provincial leader for the next three years, Sisters Donna Collins, Maureen Glavin, Theresa Moser and Diane Roche will join me in service to the province. Each of them is committed to the General Chapter call, “To be One Body which loves, practices and gives witness to justice, peace and integrity of creation at all levels of our life and mission.”

Finally, our bicentennial celebrating the pioneer spirit of Saint Rose Philippine Duchesne continues with highlights including the dedication of a new sculpture of Philippine; the Frontiers Conference representing RSCJ from 24 countries; celebrations of the 200th anniversary of the Academy of the Sacred Heart in St. Charles, Missouri; a service day for the Sacred Heart family around the world; and a Eucharistic celebration at the Cathedral Basilica of St. Louis in November. We will share more about these events in our next issue of *Heart* magazine.

With our leadership changes, bicentennial events and, even, construction at our provincial offices, we have had a busy and exciting year! As fall arrives, soon to be followed by Advent and Christmas, we hope you will find your own ways to spread peace and justice in our world today.

With love and gratitude,



Sheila Hammond, RSCJ  
Provincial  
United States – Canada Province



**New Provincial Team:** from left, Sisters Diane Roche; Theresa Moser; Sheila Hammond, Provincial; Donna Collins; and Maureen Glavin



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of Creation (JPIC)**

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# Heart

*Heart* is published two times a year to highlight the mission and ministries of the Society of the Sacred Heart, United States–Canada, for a wide circle of friends.

The Society of the Sacred Heart was founded by Saint Madeleine Sophie Barat in post-revolutionary France and brought to the United States by Saint Rose Philippine Duchesne in 1818.

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ON THE COVER: Children at a new section of the border wall on the U.S.-Mexico border, Ciudad Juárez, Mexico.  
©Jose Luis Gonzalez/Reuters/Newscom

# Hope for and in the journey

## Solidarity with our migrant brothers, sisters

By Imma De Stefanis, RSCJ



Photo by Imma De Stefanis, RSCJ

At the Border Witness Program, a visit to the wall is one of the most poignant moments for participants.

How many times have we heard life compared to a journey? Probably often enough to have it dangerously close to being a cliché. Yet we know it to be true when we reflect on the ups-and-downs of our personal and professional paths; moments of pride and setback. We may feel exhilarated considering the road ahead for our children as they make their way. This exhilaration can be filled with an immense sense of possibilities, punctuated by twinges of nervousness, and, yes, deep breaths of hope for and in the journey.

These feelings are also true for millions of people on the move worldwide. Most people would not readily give up family, friends, culture – almost everything – if not for a greater good. Most are driven by living in conditions of poverty; political, religious or ethnic oppression; and violence or war.

### Helping Mexican-American women

This is the story of intersecting journeys. In 2011, Imma De Stefanis, RSCJ, and Reyna González, RSCJ, organized the RSCJ Forum on Immigration in Washington, D.C. Sponsored by the United States Province (at that time not yet united with Canada), it brought together RSCJ from the U.S., Canada and Mexico to jointly examine the current conditions and needs of people migrating from Central and South America, and to attempt to develop concrete actions.

Two RSCJ who had never known each other before would find in each other similar interests not commonly found in the Society: Rose Marie Quilter, RSCJ, from the U.S. Province and Marimer Cepeda, RSCJ, from the Mexico Province.

As Sister Quilter recounts, “Sister Cepeda initiated a conversation with me suggesting that we collaborate in the U.S. in the area of holistic health education for Mexican-American women since, together, we have 50 years of ministerial experience in this field.”

Theirs is not a terribly commonplace ministry in most arenas of religious life. Yet their paths crossed, and from this grew the project *Sueños Sin Fronteras* (Dreams Without Borders).

She goes on to say, “Marimer’s invitation sparked my immediate enthusiasm; I felt that this might be an answer to my prayer since 2008, to understand where God is calling me. At the same time, given my age, 76, I realized I needed to gather information and seriously discern the invitation.”

This project would be realized in Alamo, Texas, in the Rio Grande Valley with an organization called ARISE (A Resource in Serving Equity) over a period of three years. This area is a border town with Reynosa, Mexico, one of the most notoriously dangerous areas of Mexico. By 2014, Sister Quilter’s journey took her from living and ministering in Albany, New York, to living in a trailer on the property of ARISE.

Sister Quilter received “little” nudges from God along the way that took her down the path to this border town to work with the women of ARISE in the *colonias*. *Colonias* are unincorporated areas usually lacking infrastructures and public services. They are plagued with problems of contaminated water, poor educational systems and lack of access to hospitals, to name a few.

ARISE is like few other organizations. From its very inception, Mercy Sister Gerrie Noughton believed, “Never do for the people what they can do for themselves.” This has been ARISE’s motto for 30 years. It aligned perfectly with Sister Quilter’s desire to be present and support the women of the *colonias* in their ongoing journey toward growing skills in the areas of English, public speaking and health education.

Sister Quilter taught basic English to the leaders of ARISE to help them become more fluent in bilingual meetings. She also trained them to do acupressure so that they could help and teach others. She shares, “I teach simple things, but I want them to do them extremely well.”

The women of ARISE have become one of the most well-respected, influential change agents in the areas with demonstrable success in bringing such services as running water and electricity to the *colonias* and in fighting for a quality education for their children.



Photo by Imma De Stefanis, RSCJ

Rose Marie Quilter, RSCJ (center), with ARISE leaders.

## Experiencing the border

By 2013, Sisters González and De Stefanis, on behalf of the Stuart Center, went to visit Sister Quilter in her simple trailer, which had also served to host so many visitors before. The purpose of the visit was to know first-hand where Sister Quilter was living and ministering in order to support her more fully. When they crossed paths with Lourdes Flores, executive director of ARISE, along with Eva Soto and Ramona Casas, as well as the army of women running centers in four different *colonias*, there would be no looking back.

The Stuart Center went on to collaborate with ARISE in offering the *Border Witness Program*. This program provides participants from all over with a first-hand experience of the reality of immigration through the eyes of immigrants themselves and those working on their behalf.

The visit to the wall is one of the most poignant moments. When a group collects around the wall, it is not unusual for Border Patrol to appear seemingly out of nowhere as a quiet presence for a few minutes. The walk is often strewn with personal effects, reminders of a desperate, hope-filled journey to a new beginning, new possibilities and a new life.

The visit to the detention center for unaccompanied minors lends heart-wrenching reality to the “issues” that now have a human face and story. We cannot ask the children their names or anything about them, where they are from, why they left or how they arrived.



At the Border Witness Project, (from left): Trudy Considine, RSCJ; Imma De Stefanis, RSCJ; Reyna Gonzalez, RSCJ; and Chelilu Buenfil, RSCJ (Mexico Province).

These moments with the children are slices of time shared over games, such as Uno. Some do all the asking, curious and eager about so many things. Others are entirely uncommunicative, and we share for those moments the anguishing questions: What has this child experienced, seen, heard? Will he be okay?

“Jose” is a lively 13-year-old who proudly boasts of the great responsibilities he had at home; he was charged with the care of nearly 100 goats. He goes on to say he is eager to leave the center so that he can find work to send money home to his parents to help with the care of his younger siblings.

The *Border Witness Program* for many is an education of mind and heart, two pathways that must merge if we are to respond intelligently and compassionately to the needs of others.

It is so easy for us to become comfortable in a predictable work that we either participate in or create. Not so, for Sister Quilter. She moved on from ARISE in much the same discerned way as when she arrived. The discernment of her arrival was not a solitary one, however. It occurred in conjunction with the leaders of ARISE. The women whom she had taught were now the teachers of other women; the multiplier effect clearly in place.

## Learning about immigration, human trafficking

A year ago, Sister Quilter went to the Mexican American Catholic College (MACC) in San Antonio, Texas, where she lives and works. Later in the year, another visit would occur. This time by Diane Roche, RSCJ (former director of JPIC), and Reyna González, RSCJ (director of Educational Initiatives and Leadership), and this opened yet another door. Sisters Roche and González determined MACC to be the perfect venue for a long-overdue gathering on immigration.

In April, the Society’s Continental Network of Popular Education (*LA Red*) held its biennial international conference/workshop in both San Antonio and McAllen, Texas. In close collaboration with MACC and ARISE, the coordinating team

of Reyna González, RSCJ (United States – Canada), Carmen Cecilia Alfaro, RSCJ (Colombia) and Carmen Margarita Fagot, RSCJ (Puerto Rico), orchestrated *Crossing Frontiers, Connecting Humanity: Immigration and Human Trafficking*.

The conference/workshop drew nearly 100 participants from nine countries, six religious congregations and innumerable nonprofit organizations. Speakers included:

- **Kevin Appleby** from the Center for Migration Studies in New York, who offered an analysis of the U.S. national context of migration and its political, economic, social and educational implications.
- **Irazú Gómez** from the Integral Accompaniment Network for Migrants based in Mexico City, who led an analysis of the migratory reality from the perspective of Latin America and the Caribbean.
- **Sheila Smith, RSCJ**, the Society’s NGO representative at the United Nations, who presented an eye-opening analysis and reflection on the many aspects of human trafficking.

Participants had the opportunity not only to discuss and debate the analyses, but also to hear stories and testimonials that awoken the heart, once again, to the reality that is human and to human dignity so that we do not linger only in the debate about data. Participants visited with families and sat side-by-side with other conference participants who themselves are immigrants recounting their experiences.

They heard about the 36-year-old woman who had been unable to return to her home country when her mother, whom she had not seen in 20 years when she left for economic reasons, was dying. At the same time, her 16-year-old daughter stood by her side during a visit with participants; “Lupe” is perfectly bilingual, excelling in school, and has her sights already set for college and a career in engineering. Among the visitors was someone who could advise her a bit along that path.

We can quickly become accustomed to our life circumstances and call them normal, even if they are unhealthy and destructive in any form. Whether 76 years of age or 36, or 16, to risk and sacrifice for a greater good reminds us there can be hope in and for the journey.

Journeying with people of different cultures and races, and listening profoundly to the joys and sufferings of humanity, allow us to be touched in a way that can lead us out of the norm, out of preconceived ideas and biases toward a loving, compassionate response.

In short, sometimes living an extraordinary life means giving up the life we have come to know as normal. ✦

# Province-wide JPIC reflection process

By Diane Roche, RSCJ

The calls of a General Chapter tend to unfold slowly, as members of the Sacred Heart family around the world reflect on and try to integrate them into their daily lives.

One of the strongest, most often repeated themes during the preparation for the 2016 Chapter was the call to respond to painful injustices that often affect the most vulnerable and voiceless. Some issues, like migration and the degradation of the environment, are of concern in almost every province. Others are more specific to particular countries or cultures. But our ability through the internet to see the suffering as it unfolds creates a sense of urgency.

In response, the International Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) Office at the motherhouse in Rome decided that the time had come to convene an international meeting of RSCJ from every province to explore ways in which we could “Act as One Body” to effectively and strategically address some of these issues.

To make sure that the agenda reflected the reality “on the ground,” a six-month reflection process was launched in all provinces of the Society of the Sacred Heart on the Feast of Philippine in November 2017. Reports from this process will be used to create



## International JPIC Meeting 2018

JPIC - Justice, Peace and Integrity of the Creation  
Society of the Sacred Heart

the agenda for the international meeting, which will be held November 14-24, 2018, at the Carmelite Missionaries Center of Spirituality in Tagaytay City, in the Philippines.

In the United States – Canada Province, more than 180 people responded to the call to join a group to explore their own relationship to several of the pressing justice concerns in this province, including racism, poverty, immigration/trafficking and the environment. Resources for reflection, prepared by RSCJ and members of the extended Sacred Heart family, were sent to all participants during Advent so that, honoring the call to “Embrace Silence,” each person could take some time for personal reflection on the issue chosen.

In January, March and May, each of the 27 groups was encouraged to meet, either in person or using technology, to explore the questions in the reflection booklet sent to everyone. Facilitators of these groups were volunteers, many of them Associates or teachers in Network schools, who bravely faced the challenges of learning how to use Zoom or Vidyo and faithfully sent in their reports and pictures of group members.

The JPIC Office at the Stuart Center collected all these reports and sent out reminders encouraging groups not to give up. Many groups sent additional resources (interesting articles, videos) back and forth in between meetings.

The insights and questions raised in these reports reflect an impressive depth of sharing. Many of the groups have expressed not only a desire to keep reflecting together but also to move to some kind of collective action.

As one facilitator stated, “I do hope you can tell by our meeting notes how rich the dialogue has been for our small group and how important this topic is to the community we have formed.” ✦

...the call to respond to painful injustices that often affect the most vulnerable and voiceless. Some issues, like migration and the degradation of the environment, are of concern in almost every province.

# Slavery, accountability, reconciliation

## Past and present: Confronting our racism

By Linda Behrens

As the Society of the Sacred Heart, United States – Canada Province celebrates 200 years of the congregation’s presence in the United States, the religious have committed themselves to a better understanding of the ongoing issue of racism in the world and the Society of the Sacred Heart’s participation in the historic sin of slavery.

Along with bishops, priests, the Jesuits and most of the families of their students, the communities of the Religious of the Sacred Heart, from the time of Philippine until the Civil War, owned, bought and sold enslaved persons in the slave states of Missouri and Louisiana. Enslaved persons built the buildings, made the bricks and sustained the foundations. They worked side by side with the sisters, taking care of the children, cooking, washing and gardening,

Although the sad reality of slave-owning by the Society of the Sacred Heart in the United States has not been hidden, this history and its acknowledgment have not been actively publicized. Information was presented in Society publications as early as 1957, as recently as 2010, and in the 2017 Spirituality Forum sponsored by the Society. Philippine was a woman of her time, and the Society must reconcile with this painful part of its past.

### Beginning the conversation: Forming the committee

In the fall of 2016, the provincial team constituted a committee with a mandate to focus on the Society’s role in racism and slavery, the committee on Slavery, Accountability and Reconciliation.\* The provincial team wanted to uncover the truths of people’s stories, to honor their memories and heal relationships. The committee understood that its work would be important in moving the conversation about slavery and racism forward to effect change and to be a positive contribution to the larger conversation around race and social justice in the world we live in today.

The committee has been active in research and in sharing its findings with the province. During this time of research, the sisters are sharing historical facts, attempting to locate the descendants of enslaved persons who lived on property owned by the Society of the Sacred Heart, and making recommendations to the provincial team to take measures to address this painful chapter in the Society’s history. As part of its recommendation, the committee works to transform ongoing racist attitudes and behaviors among themselves as RSCJ and in the wider Sacred Heart family today. These are the first steps in ongoing conversations, actions steps to reconcile and in healing.

“We must engage in deeper research with a view to telling the fuller story. This includes confronting a painful part of our legacy and committing to truth, healing and reconciliation for a better future,” said Carolyn Osiek, RSCJ, chair of the Committee on Slavery, Accountability and Reconciliation.

### Discovering this history

It is known that the Society of the Sacred Heart had enslaved persons in Grand Coteau, Louisiana; Natchitoches, Louisiana; Convent, Louisiana; and St. Louis and Florissant, Missouri. Research by RSCJ and other members of the committee is ongoing.

Most of the historical information found to date is from Grand Coteau. The Society’s founders of Grand Coteau, Mother Eugénie Audé and Sister Mary Layton, arrived in 1821 and started a school. The first enslaved persons on the property may have been loaned to the founders by nearby Catholic families who had daughters in the school, such as the Hardey family, slaveholders from Maryland whose daughter, Mary Ann (later Aloysia), was one of the first students.

Mrs. Charles Smith, the donor of the school property, had promised an enslaved family to the convent, although the committee has not found a record of who they were. The





**Eliza “Liza” Nebbit (1811-1889)**

*“Colored Child of the Sacred Heart, first slave what was brought in dis Convent by Mother Duchesne” —Eliza’s closing in a letter she dictated in 1880 to Rev. Mother Randall, superior in New York.*

research reveals that Mrs. Smith owned 25 enslaved persons in 1820, so some of the earliest enslaved persons on the property may have come from her. The school property was surrounded by plantations owned by settlers with roots in Maryland. When the Jesuits founded a school in the same town in 1838, the Jesuits and the Society of the Sacred Heart shared enslaved persons between the schools and property.

During this time, a number of young women entered the Society of the Sacred Heart. Many were from slaveholding families, such as the Gardiners and Trichels, which meant their dowry and/or inheritances included enslaved persons.

## Genealogy research: Identifying descendants

Maureen J. Chicoine, RSCJ, is one of the committee members doing genealogy research to identify descendants of enslaved persons once owned by the Society of the Sacred Heart in the United States. Through her work, she has identified descendants. She and Irma Dillard, RSCJ, also a member of the committee, recently met with Joseph (Sony) Eaglin, a descendant of Frank Hawkins and Jenny Eaglin Hawkins.

“There was no consistent way in which the purchases, births or arrivals of various enslaved persons were recorded,” Sister Chicoine shared. “When the names of the enslaved persons in the various files are compiled, there are possibly 70.”

Records at Convent, Louisiana, indicate that there were also as many as 80 enslaved persons at Saint Michael between 1828 and 1865. Four families from Saint Michael in Convent can be identified with a degree of certainty as enslaved persons of the Society, three of these having descendants. Efforts are being made to research their descendants using census, church records and other sources.

## Reconciliation

As part of the Society’s efforts of reconciliation, in late September 2018, the Academy of the Sacred Heart in Grand Coteau will host a gathering of descendants and the Society of the Sacred Heart. That day, there will be a dedication of a monument in the parish cemetery naming the enslaved persons of the convent known to be buried there. The museum at the school will have an area dedicated to the convent’s history and acknowledgment of its role in slavery. The names of all known enslaved persons will be part of this area of the museum. A plaque will be placed at the slave quarters naming those living there in its first years. A ritual memorial of the ancestors designed by their descendants will also be part of the event.

There is still much more to do to reconcile the Society’s history and participation in slavery and for healing to commence. The Society looks forward to continuing this dialogue and publicly confronting racism. ✚

\*The Slavery, Accountability and Reconciliation Committee:  
Maureen Chicoine, RSCJ; Irma Dillard, RSCJ; Marilyn McMorro, RSCJ;  
Catherine Mooney; Carolyn Osiek, RSCJ (chair); and Emory Webre

# Justice and the RSCJ charism

By Sharon Karam, RSCJ

While Madeleine Sophie Barat wouldn't have used the term social justice in today's sense of the word, she cared about it in some of the same ways we do: restoring human dignity, attending to right relationships and getting to the causes of inequality. She would want to lead all to understand that educational endeavors must include active involvement in the issues of the day that affect the quality of human life, especially the future of young people.

Sophie herself knew the constraints of a post-revolutionary society and grounded the mission of the Society in a deep sense of contemplation, focused on glorifying the Heart of Jesus, while remaining deeply aware of the currents in external society that begged to be changed.

But she remained a person of her time, the product of a class-based society, which she understood as antithetical to religion after the French Revolution. Therefore, she wouldn't have used the term social justice or have had the same sense of restructuring society that we might have today. She did, however, believe deeply that "times change and we must change with them" and noted the implications of this change in her instructions, both to teachers and administrators.

She always established a free school near every boarding school (two of the four original means of carrying out our mission in the original *Constitutions*), and insisted that the religious could express only one preference in their assignments: for teaching the poor in the free school. Something in that guideline gives us a hint of her thinking: while she didn't use the word justice, her idea here clearly indicates that an underlying concern for those who are marginalized deserves our attention, and this concern is at the heart of our vocation as Religious of the Sacred Heart.

As the Society has attempted to meet new needs over its 218 years of ministerial life, the realization of how those "times change" and that "we must change with them" has called us to address many of the issues that fall under the category

often referred to as JPIC: justice, peace and the integrity of creation. Underlying all three is justice toward others and toward this beautiful "blue marble" we share with all other creatures and the rest of humanity.

In our 1982 *Constitutions*, our charism is expressed in clear continuity with the original aim:

**"By our charism, we are consecrated  
to GLORIFYING THE HEART OF JESUS:  
we answer His call  
to discover and reveal His love  
letting ourselves be transformed by His Spirit  
so as to live united and conformed to Him,  
and through our love and service  
to radiate the very love of His Heart."  
(*Constitutions* 4)**

But significantly, we took into account a new understanding of how changing times demanded a new understanding of our charism in a subsequent paragraph:

**"We participate in the mission of the Church  
through the service of education,  
which is our way of continuing the work of Christ.  
...  
Our starting point is the Gospel  
and all that it demands from us of love, forgiveness  
and justice,  
and of solidarity with those who are poor  
and rejected by the world."  
(*Constitutions* 7)**

Our understanding of the charism has deepened over the years, yet there is clearly continuity here with what Sophie and the early communities saw as their call. In the most recent General Chapter, in summer 2016, one sees in the

four calls issued to RSCJ and the Sacred Heart family, a wonderful mix of the call to discover the riches of the Heart of Christ and the urgency of taking those gifts to others – a work of love and a work of justice:

**To reach new frontiers:** To go out, to “set sail” as a Society and go with others to new geographic and existential peripheries to accompany the life that is emerging there. To defend justice, peace and the integrity of creation in response to all of those who are searching for meaning in their lives, those who have been wounded, displaced and excluded because of poverty, violence and environmental degradation.

**To live more humanly:** In the radical style of Jesus of Nazareth, we wish to be in closer relationship as sisters with one another and with others; we wish to be simpler, more human and closer to people and their experience, in order to show forth the joyful and compassionate face of God and to be at the service of life, wherever we are sent.

**To create silence:** To deepen our interior life, our capacity for contemplation and for listening to the heartbeat of God in ourselves and in our world; to discern in silence and welcome the action of the Spirit that transforms us, energizes us, and calls us to live our prophetic and educational mission.

**To be and to act as one Body:** To revitalize our unity in diversity and to act as one Body, dynamic, interconnected, linked with other bodies, in the world and as Church, in order to share, collaborate and be in solidarity among ourselves and with others. (General Chapter 2016) ✦



Students at Escuela Guadalupe del Sagrado Corazón (Mexico).



Photo by Imma De Stefanis, RSCJ

Poem by Lolín Menéndez, RSCJ, of Puerto Rico out of her experience at the Crossing Frontiers-Connecting Humanity Conference on Migration and Human Trafficking.

## Rio Grande Valley April 11, 2018

Today  
I walked  
in a field  
of broken dreams.

Everyday dreams –  
a toothbrush  
a belt, a shoelace,  
a sock.

Hope-filled dreams –  
an empty wallet  
a woman’s compact  
smashed in two.

Vanished dreams –  
a backpack, thrown aside  
a plastic bag, never used.

Dreams left behind –  
two ladders  
a cross.

# When it rains, it pours!

By Melanie Guste, RSCJ



“Rain on St. Peter Street” ©Diane Millsap

**It rains! It rains!** From within the watery bowl of New Orleans on the anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, my attention wanders through the nearest window to gaze with pure amazement at the preponderance of water.

It pours! It pours! Dumping massive pools along every street; the city comes to a strange quiet as the familiar sounds of streetcars stop, and hunkering down begins.

Puddling and pooling, everywhere.

As a child, I loved to wade and wallow in such pools of unexpected water. Glee came easily in the “Big Easy” with a carefree innocence to

welcome the predictable afternoon rain shower. Orange soda time. Afternoon naps. We remember – even then, it rained “cats and dogs” (or, as locals say, “cats and frogs”) in New Orleans.

Seems different now; there is simply so much more of the rain.

Scientists claim the cause is global warming and the warming of the oceans. They analyze the details of data,

and they debate probabilities. This is what we know as “paralysis of analysis.”

Here, we know these things by being in the bowl: first-hand, viscerally, and with muddy feet, wet hair and damp skin. We know by instinct, not percentages. We know that what was once wet is wetter, not drier. We know that the rain is fiercer and more intense when it does rain. We know that our rain is less predictable. We know that rainwater doesn’t drain, even though it once did in our massive system of drains and canals. We know that all of this rain affects so many more people.

No one needs to argue percentages to know these things.

On the anniversary of one storm, another one was making U.S. history: Hurricane Harvey. While it bore down on Houston with unrelenting rain, one’s heart did break; and it is not imaginary. It hurts for the children and their parents wading through the streets, looking back at their flooded homes with anguish in their faces. They wade forward with courage, destination uncertain. Future undetermined.

Another storm on its heels: Hurricane Irma, the largest storm in history, turns to Florida. Another one behind that one.

Can anyone doubt that creation isn’t groaning, begging for our attention?

After Katrina, a small group of Religious of the Sacred Heart gathered

“We need to treat the earth sort of like a backdrop for our lives. A ‘cosmic Christology’ reminds us that every aspect of the cosmos is in Christ, everything is Word incarnate. Everything bears the infinite love of God, each in its own way, which means that there’s nothing earthly that doesn’t have some divine dignity to it.”

—Ilia Delio, OSF

a Franciscan Sister of Washington, D.C., and theologian



The Academy of the Sacred Heart (The Rosary) in New Orleans held a hurricane relief drive for people affected by Hurricane Harvey in August 2017.

in our religious community in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Weathered by that storm, we prayed. Asking God for understanding and direction, we committed that day to prayer and action. We formed a group, “*Healthy Waters and Coastal Restoration*,” with our shared desire to act locally, starting with our communities and ourselves. We wrote an article about our personal decisions to “change our course,” and we shared these publicly with others in our community newsletter, *Update*. We invited others to join us.

A disaster pivoted us, radically turned us and converted us.

It was care that joined us, and it is care that moves us forward. Care for God’s creation. Care for our children’s future. Care for our common home. Now, our group continues its humble efforts with more than 100 members across the United States and in five countries of the world.

Wherever we are, we educate and advocate. We act where we can and how we can. We support one another. In these ways, we contribute to the building of community.

Humble work. Small works. And often hidden. ✦



**If you would like to join our group, you can find us:**

- **Facebook public group:** *Healthy Waters and Coastal Restoration Group: Society of the Sacred Heart*
- **Scoop it:** *Healthy Waters*
- **Pinterest:** *Melanie Guste, RSCJ*, and her boards, *Healthy Waters and Global Water Crisis*
- **Email:** [mguste@rscj.org](mailto:mguste@rscj.org) and ask to add your name to our distribution email list.

# Sacred Heart goes solar

By Erin Everson

Within the last five years, Sacred Heart Network schools and province ministries have implemented various sustainability initiatives in an effort to reduce their carbon footprint and decrease their overall energy costs. Chief among these initiatives has been the move toward solar energy use.



Solar panels on the gymnasium roof at Academy of the Sacred Heart in St. Charles, Missouri.

In 2013, Princeton Academy of the Sacred Heart, an all-boys kindergarten through eighth grade school in Princeton, New Jersey, installed more than 700 solar panels on its 50-acre campus. In addition, the school dug 40 geothermal wells that provide more energy efficient temperature control for the main building.

“It’s a real investment in the future of our school,” said Headmaster Rik Dugan. He noted that half of Princeton Academy’s facilities are powered by renewable energy. In addition, the school has monitors on site for the boys to check energy consumption and generation statistics on any given day. “Our campus is a living laboratory,” said Dugan.

Academy of the Sacred Heart, a co-ed kindergarten through eighth grade school located in St. Charles, Missouri, and the first Sacred Heart school established in North America, had 88 solar panels installed on its gymnasium roof in November 2013. With the addition, the Academy estimates a total net savings of \$103,000 over the 25-year life span of the solar panels. This savings includes the net cost of the installation of the panels and the electricity saved over the 25-year life span.

In 2014, Mary McGann, RSCJ, and Paula Toner, RSCJ, took the lead on pushing for solar panels at Sophia House, a Sacred Heart welcoming community located in Berkeley, California. After approval from the provincial team in 2015, they signed a 20-year lease with Solar City, and the panels were installed and running by October of that same year.

Sister Toner said that what caught her eye about Solar City was that it had no upfront or installation cost for the solar panels. Sophia House does, however, pay a monthly fee to the company for the amount of energy they produce but at a much lower rate than what it would pay to a utility company.

Not too far away, in San Diego, California, Regina Shin, RSCJ, and Bunny Flick, RSCJ, had been leading the charge to go solar at the Spiritual Ministry Center.

With electricity prices on the rise and the push to go solar in California ever more present, the provincial team sent approval in 2017, and the center had solar panels in use by December of that same year.

Sister Flick said after one year, they will be able to measure the savings and understand better how long it will take to gain from the investment. She assured, however, the center is producing more energy from the panels than it consumes. “We are completely self-sufficient,” she said.

Most recently, the Stuart Center, a Sacred Heart center for mission, educational leadership and technology, located in Washington, D.C., installed solar panels in August.

Imma De Stefanis, RSCJ and Vicky Rajca, RSCJ, spearheaded the project and have signed a 15-year lease. Within five to seven years, the center is projected to generate enough energy so that they will break even and from that point forward make a profit on the energy they produce, said Vicky Rajca, RSCJ, director of finance and operations at the center. She added until that point, the center will see a decrease in

its monthly electric bill. Previous environmentally-based renovations and upgrades resulted in an energy audit showing the Stuart Center to already be operating at 93 percent energy efficiency.

In every case, these schools and ministries expressed that the motivation to push these initiatives forward came from a drive to live out the mission of the Society of the Sacred Heart. In the school setting, it stems from Goal III, Criterion 5, which reads, “The school teaches respect for creation and prepares students to be stewards of the earth’s resources.”

Moreover, Sister Flick cited the 2008 Chapter, when the province formed the Office of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC), and Pope Francis’s encyclical on the environment, *Laudato si’*, published in 2015.

“Reducing our carbon footprint is so important and is certainly in line with living more humanly,” Sister Rajca commented in reference to one of the four calls from the 2016 Chapter.

Sister Flick said, “I don’t think we are out of the ordinary or unique, but it is a good feeling to really be on board and conscious. It feels as if we are listening to where the Spirit is calling us today.” ❖



The Academy of the Sacred Heart in the historic town of St. Charles, Missouri, near the Missouri River. Amongst the two century old homes and buildings, the solar panels on the gymnasium (lower left) stand out in this aerial view. (Note the Shrine of Saint Rose Philippine Duchesne in the lower right corner.)

# Old prophecies, new partnership

## The Potawatomi and Sacred Heart family strengthen ties

By Diane Roche, RSCJ



Photo by Irma De Stefanis, RSCJ

Eva Marie Carney, a Citizen Potawatomi, shared the Potawatomi creation story and their connection with creation to participants at the Global Citizen Program, sponsored by the Stuart Center.

The confluence of Anishinaabe prophecy and recent events have led many to feel that this may be a significant moment for the Indigenous people of North America and for all of the people who have arrived since. It may also be a new moment for the relationship between the Sacred Heart family and the Potawatomi, who are a part of the Anishinaabe people.

According to the Seven Fires Prophecy, the “light skinned people” of North America are approaching a critical decision point that will profoundly affect the future of all living things on earth. One road leads to a future that is “green and lush,” while the other continues the ecologically destructive behavior brought to this continent by the first European colonists and leads to “much suffering and death to all the Earth’s people.”

Naomi Klein, a Canadian author and social activist, places responsibility for this crisis on the social, political and economic systems that humans have created. In her book (and related documentary) entitled, *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. The Climate*, she explores the way that creation stories influence people’s interaction with the created world. The Judeo-Christian story, in which God tells the first humans to go forth and subdue the earth (Genesis 1:28), has led some to treat the earth as simply a resource to be exploited.

In contrast, Robin Wall Kimmerer, who has a doctorate in plant ecology and is a member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, in her book, *Braiding Sweetgrass*, tells the story of Sky Woman, who falls pregnant to earth and, with the help of all the water creatures, creates Turtle Island, on which she brings forth plants and the human race. For many, this understanding that all living things are related in a web of life provides a more useful framework for negotiating the current ecological crisis.

### The Dakota Access Pipeline

The role of young Lakota men and women in the Dakota Access Pipeline protests at Standing Rock reservation in North Dakota in 2016 reminded many of yet another prophecy concerning the “Seventh Generation.” According to this prophecy, in a period of crises predicted near the “end times,” it would be the young who would lead the way.



The Dakota Access protest drew unprecedented numbers of Native Americans from different tribes to speak out together in defense of the sacredness of creation. Their way of welcoming non-native people, including veterans, while insisting that everyone respect the leadership and traditions of the indigenous women and men who were leading the protest, earned them extraordinarily positive media coverage and captured the imagination of people of good will around the world.

RSCJ and Associates from across the province participated in many marches and demonstrations in support of the effort to stop the pipeline.

## The Doctrine of Discovery

The scandal of the “Doctrine of Discovery” is another significant event that received a lot of attention in 2015 as a result of the canonization of Franciscan Father Junipero Serra by Pope Francis. This international legal principle, articulated as early as the 15th century, stated that “land not inhabited by Christians was available to ‘be discovered,’ claimed and exploited by Christian Rulers” (Guilder Lehrman Institute of American History).

There continues to be a groundswell of activism around efforts to abolish this doctrine and solicit apologies from those who benefited from it or did harm in its name. This form of institutionalized racism inspired a group of RSCJ and Associates in California to form a group to research their own family stories and propose action steps toward reconciliation and restitution where appropriate. (See the side bar for a more complete description of the Doctrine of Discovery and its implications.)

## The Potawatomi

In 2017 and 2018, the Society of the Sacred Heart has been celebrating 200 years since the arrival of Saint Rose Philippine Duchesne in St. Charles, Missouri. She opened the first free school west of the Mississippi River in September 1818.

In 1841, Philippine’s desire to serve among the native people came to fruition. At the specific request of Father Peter Verhaegen, the Jesuit in charge of the mission, she went with three other Religious of the Sacred Heart to Sugar Creek, Kansas, to establish a school for Potawatomi girls. At age 72, she was too frail to be of much help with the physical work, and she could not learn the Potawatomi language. She spent much of her time in prayer, gaining the name “Woman Who Prays Always.”



Posing at one of the Trail of Death markers, (from left) George Godfrey; Tom Hamilton; Sister Virginia Pearl, CSJ; Bob Pearl; and Shirley and Bill Willard. All are members of Citizen Potawatomi Nation except the Willards, who were adopted as honorary Potawatomi in 2003.

After just one year, she was called back to St. Charles because of her health. Although she was in Sugar Creek just a short time, she made a deep impression on the Potawatomi.

In 1848, when the government moved the Potawatomi to Saint Marys, Kansas, the Religious of the Sacred Heart moved with them and established a school in Saint Marys.

While many Catholic Potawatomi have honored the memory of Philippine’s time among them, passing on stories about her from one generation to the next, their relationships with individual RSCJ and with the extended Sacred Heart family were generally limited. Some attended her canonization in Rome and welcomed RSCJ and others who drove out to visit the memorial park at Sugar Creek.

The bicentennial celebration, and especially the Spirituality Forum in Saint Louis in July 2017, provided an opportunity for a new relationship between the Society of the Sacred Heart and the Potawatomi Indians.

The theme of the Spirituality Forum, focused as it was on crossing frontiers, led to two major presentations to the group by Janet and Robert Pearl (members of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation). Janet is the daughter of Potawatomi tribal elder Robert Pearl.



One of the talks described the “Trail of Death” memorial caravan, organized every five years since 1988 to commemorate the 660-mile forced march from Twin Lakes, Indiana, to Sugar Creek, Kansas, during which more than 40 members of the tribe died.

In honor of the bicentennial, Robert and Janet Pearl extended an invitation for a small group of RSCJ, Associates and others to participate in the 2018 event, which will begin with a two-day “Trail of Courage Festival” in Rochester, Indiana, during the weekend of September 15, ending with a Mass on September 22 in Sugar Creek.

Six Religious of the Sacred Heart (Deanna Rose Von Barga, Mary Frohlich, Kathleen Hughes, Kathy McGrath, Carolyn Osiek and Diane Roche) have signed up to participate in all or part of the nine-day experience. In addition, four other women (Kathryn Heetderks, an Associate and teacher at Stone Ridge School of the Sacred Heart in Bethesda, Maryland; Jan Compton, a teacher at Stone Ridge; Mary Jane Tiernan, an Associate; and Sister Mary Seibert, MSC, a Missionary of the Sacred Heart) have also signed up. Duchesne Academy of the Sacred Heart in Omaha, Nebraska, will send a group to take part in the closing liturgy.

“The long-term effect of the Sacred Heart sisters on the community of Saint Marys, Kansas, is still being felt today and will never be forgotten,” shared Robert Pearl.

May we listen with open hearts to the stories of suffering on this Trail of Death, and may this time of sharing lead to a new, more hope-filled future. ✦

## The Doctrine of Discovery

This international legal principle, arising from as early as the Middle Ages in European Christendom, has justified the subjugation of non-Christian nations and peoples and “the propagation of the Christian empire” (Pope Alexander VI, 15th century) throughout the world. Retroactively labeled the “Doctrine of Discovery,” this “doctrine” came to be codified as law through several papal bulls, particularly the papal bull *Romanus Pontifex* of 1454 and the papal bull *Inter Caetera* of 1493 (right after Columbus “discovered America”), the latter bull dividing parts of the New World between Spain and Portugal and advancing the already approved slave-trade.

Over the past 500 years, the Doctrine of Discovery has established patterns of domination and dehumanization that have become institutionalized in language, thought, and behavior in our cultural and legal systems. The transference of this “doctrine” into the U.S. judicial system occurred in 1823 (*Johnson & Grahm’s Lessee v. M’Intosh & Wheat*), and this legal principle continues into the 21st century. It was recently invoked against Indigenous Peoples’ land rights in a 2005 Supreme Court case. ✦

Source: [www.ConsciousElders.org](http://www.ConsciousElders.org)



Diane Roche, RSCJ, and Lauren Brownlee, Associate, carrying signs in front of the Army Corps of Engineers in Washington, D.C.

# The future is now

By Imma De Stefanis, RSCJ

*Janet Erskine Stuart, RSCJ, the sixth superior general of the Society of the Sacred Heart, for whom the Stuart Center is named, is quoted as saying, “In no order of things is adolescence, the time of the simple life.”*

*These words ring truer today than when they were first written 100 years ago. Stuart was speaking of the stage of adolescence as a tumultuous time in a young person’s life. As adolescents grow into young adults, family, school and societal contexts can serve to support or challenge the transition, either positively or negatively.*

*The world in which young people are coming of age today has led to stress levels that mirror adults’ experiences (American Psychological Association, *Stress in America* survey). The Religious of the Sacred Heart, worldwide, continually renew their commitment to walk with youth in a variety of ways and settings. In the United States – Canada (USC) Province, we take a particular focus on relationship of youth to our work for justice, peace and the integrity of creation.*

*All young people have the right to experience a sense of connectedness, spiritual and intellectual nourishment, and efficacy as leaders for change. In other words, they must find and feel their place in the world, while also recognizing their responsibility and possibilities to make a positive difference.*



Photo by Imma De Stefanis, RSCJ

The Global Citizen Program participants visited local nature sites such as the United States National Arboretum, the Anacostia River and Rock Creek Park, where they explored the local flora and fauna, heard from a local environmentalist, participated in group discussions on topics like water quality and delved into issues like eco-racism.

## Welcoming communities

The USC Province has a growing number of “welcoming communities” with an emphasis on youth and young adults. The specific focus and nature of engagement of each may vary slightly, but all find common ground in the desire to accompany the young.

*Sophia House* in Berkeley, California, regularly welcomes women and young adults for prayer, meals, discussion and celebrations. The community places an emphasis on simplicity of life, care for the environment, contemplation and community.

The *Kearny Street community* in the Brookland section of northeast Washington, D.C., connects with young adults who are interested in social justice and spirituality through such activities as Taizé prayer, exploration of such topics as mass incarceration and Muslim-Christian dialogue, and discernment weekends as well as full-time, live-in experiences.

The success of this community program has led to relocation in the Brookland area of D.C. with the opening of the *Anne Montgomery House*, in honor of Anne Montgomery, RSCJ (1926-2012). Sister Montgomery was known around the world for her



Through Stuart Center programs, RSCJ like Reyna González (in white) and Imma De Stefanis (in orange) connect with young people from several countries. Also pictured, Madeline Ortiz, RSCJ, of Puerto Rico in lower right.

commitment to peace through acts of nonviolent civil disobedience.

*Duchesne House for Volunteers* in New Orleans was first established in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. It offers immersion and service experiences in the ongoing renewal efforts throughout the city while also providing opportunities to learn about the environmental factors that contributed to a storm with such devastating effects.

*Rebecca House* in White Plains, New York, opened in July 2017. Its focus is to encourage crossing frontiers and breaking any barriers that hold one back from living fully the person God calls her or him to be. It is named after the ship, *The Rebecca*, which brought Mother Philippine Duchesne and her companions to the new world.

This community offers young women and men from the U.S. and abroad an opportunity to serve as volunteers and/or interns in nonprofit organizations with a justice focus on

immigration, youth and children in the New York metropolitan area. At the same time, young adults have an experience of community life that includes RSCJ, neighbors and collaborators who share justice concerns; place emphasis on the centrality of a faith life; and enjoy meals, celebrations and festivities of all kinds.

The welcoming communities offer an environment where young adults can pursue their interests in justice in society and the environment, while growing in their spiritual lives and cultivating relationships with those who share their concerns.

In all of these communities, RSCJ believe they, too, learn and are nourished by their engagement with young adults. It is this relationship of reciprocal learning and sharing that helps RSCJ to grow, as well, in their understanding of the world and the Society's mission at the service of the world's needs.

## The Stuart Center

The Stuart Center offers a variety of programs through the Office of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) and the Office of Educational Initiatives and Leadership.

The *Summit Leadership Academy (SLA)* is a five-day program in which participants examine various forms/styles of leadership; explore personal leadership style and ability; understand the social and political contexts of leadership; develop servant leadership as a lifestyle; and create a social change capstone project for implementation in their community, school, church, etc.

Applying the methodology of popular education, SLA recognizes that adolescents and young adults have the opportunity to exercise leadership in all areas of their lives and come with experiences. The focus is on helping participants develop a leadership orientation in their lives beyond building a strong resumé. This orientation is reflected by the tagline, "Leadership is action, not position."

Participants thrive with the interactive, multi-modal approach to learning that includes guest speakers who offer inspiration and advice.

A recent participant said, "Honestly, I did not really know what to expect from the program, but I definitely expected you all would teach us something about how to be good leaders. What you showed us is how we co-construct knowledge and the importance of getting past the narrow stereotypes we have about leaders."

Another shared, "I see now that what is important is not just how to be a good leader, but how to foster good leadership. Really, when everyone exercises his or her leadership ability, the whole group benefits."

This program has been offered throughout the U.S. as well as Puerto Rico, Haiti, Cuba and Mexico. It proudly boasts that 80 percent of participant-proposed projects have reached implementation within two years resulting in broad based environmental and educational programs in their communities.

The *Sacred Heart Global Citizen Program* is a five-day overnight program geared toward an international group of young adults, many of whom are on brink of college graduation or have launched into their professional lives.

Participants reflect on the meaning of global citizenship today; explore their opportunities for increased civic engagement; analyze the global issues affecting their local contexts; and foster an appreciation for the importance of intercultural dialogue and international partnerships in the work for peace and social justice. Each time it is offered, the program has a specific focus and draws participants whose personal and possibly professional interests lie in that area. For example, the focus on immigration drew participants from U.S. border areas, Puerto Rico, Mexico and Cuba.

From this experience, a joint project was developed between young adults of Mexico and the U.S. border communities to begin an online resource network that facilitates the preparation for and ease of transition, particularly of other youth.

One participant from Mexico shared: "I came with an idea in my head of what I wanted to do and how I wanted to do it when it comes to the needs of immigrants passing through Mexico. But when I heard the personal

stories over dinner of some of the immigrant participants from the U.S. border, my heart was torn wide open. Then I realized that the way to make change in our world is not in looking at what I can do, but what we can do to break down the barriers that keep us apart and that foster prejudice and bias."

We fully recognize the importance of a collaborative approach to our work and embrace the reality that we cannot "do it all." A clear example of this fact is the June 2018 program with its focus: "Ecological Transformation through Spir-

*All young people have the right to experience a sense of connectedness, spiritual and intellectual nourishment, and efficacy as leaders for change.*

ity." This is possible in collaboration with the Center for Spirituality in Nature in Washington, D.C., under the leadership of founding director, Beth Norcross. Once again, an international group of young adults gathered at the Stuart Center in D.C. for a five-day workshop to explore spiritual practice in nature as a means of ecological transformation.

Through input and field experience throughout the area of the Potomac River Basin, participants developed a good understanding of the basics of ecological functioning and gained knowledge of Christian scripture and tradition around spirituality in nature. They experienced a number of spiritual practices that can assist them and their communities in transforming their behaviors to be more in line with God's desires for the earth. A smaller group, by design, they formed a community of learners who lived a very full experience of diving deeply into topics through analysis, reflection and

practice, while also taking advantage of all that D.C. has to offer.

The *Stuart Center International Volunteer Program* places young adults from abroad in the U.S. for short-term stays of between one and three months. Volunteers have a desire to serve, live in community, improve their English, and learn about U.S. culture beyond what mass media and social media typically offer. Many come with a desire to understand the complexity of U.S. culture in its struggles with poverty, racism and inequity.

### Engaging with youth

The Religious of the Sacred Heart espouse quite strongly the conviction that whatever they do, they do with the heart of an educator. This heart of an educator is palpable in the communities and programs that accompany young adults in their personal, professional and vocational journeys. They see that what they are doing is creating a space for a community of intergenerational learners, deeply rooted in their spiritual lives and with feet on the ground.

Through this broad-based engagement with youth and young adults, RSCJ are nourished and stretched. The engagement with youth is critical. Yes, the young are our future, but the future is now; and as Mother Stuart also said in speaking of children (youth), "They are classed as the dreamers, but they are really the seers." ❖

## Recycling treasures from Kenwood



A large circular stained-glass window and four arched stained-glass windows were recently installed at the provincial offices in St. Louis. The windows are from the Society's former Kenwood convent in Albany, New York. When the property was closed more than 10 years ago, the windows were eventually removed and placed in storage.

The arched windows now greet visitors to the new conference area from Forest Park Avenue. The circular stained-glass window can be seen from the reception area and, on the other side of the wall, in the provincial office chapel. ✦



### In memoriam

*Blessed are those who have died in the Lord; let them rest from their labors for their good deeds go with them.*

**Lorraine Lawrence, RSCJ**

*January 24, 2018*

**Madeleine Desloge, RSCJ**

*January 30, 2018*

**Elizabeth (Betty) Shearman, RSCJ**

*March 31, 2018*

**Judith (Judy) Brown, RSCJ**

*May 24, 2018*

*Full obituaries may be viewed at [rscj.org/about/memorial](http://rscj.org/about/memorial).*

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Participants collaborate and learn about immigration issues through programs like Dreams Without Borders, the Border Witness Program and more.



RSCJ find ways to reach out to young adults through educational programs at the Stuart Center and experiences with Welcoming Communities.



Not strangers to flooding in New Orleans, RSCJ and others formed a group, *Healthy Waters and Coastal Restoration*, with their shared desire to act locally. The Academy of the Sacred Heart (The Rosary) in New Orleans held a hurricane relief drive for people affected by Hurricane Harvey in August 2017.

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