



Sacred Heart

Spring 2010

A Journal of the Society of the Sacred Heart, U.S. Province



...to Heart

“Ah! How beautiful God is! It is worth it to believe in Him. How beautiful God is! It is worth it to sing of his glory, glory given to a God of all beauty, humility and simplicity. A beautiful God who gives meaning to life, even after an earthquake... He is love in solidarity with us who can be at the same time under the debris with those who are there, sick with those without legs and without arms, dead with the dead, living with the living. He is the first victim, the first survivor, the first living person to breathe the spirit of life towards a new Haiti and a new humanity. It is in this God I believe, the God of Jesus.”

— Godefroy Midi, SJ

Dear Friends,

In her article in *America* (March 1, 2010), Margarita A. Mooney described “Haiti’s Resilient Faith.” Who wasn’t struck by the immediate and deep response of the people of Port-au-Prince? We watched on CNN as they gathered together in prayer and song, praising God and opening wide their hearts in need of God’s grace, sure of God who is love. Just as powerful was how they were with one another, in spite of loss and grief, needing to join with one another for strength.

Their resilience comes from within, from a deep faith forged through suffering. And I began to see what they have to contribute to those who come to their aid. And the meaning of the question, “How can I help?” changed. Not just “What can I *do*?” but how can I relate, how ought I look at those who have suffered these losses, and how should I *be* in the effort to enable them to rebuild and renew their lives? How, in that process, can I be helped? What are my needs that these remarkable people can fill? Will I let them help me become more faith-filled and teach me how to let suffering make me more human? Then their resilient faith will have borne fruit.

This issue of *Heart* also speaks to our hearts and spans the globe with stories and reflections that give a glimpse of the breadth of what God is doing through the efforts of today’s religious, benefactors, colleagues and associates.

We religious are deeply grateful for your outpouring of love this season at the loss of our sisters whose earthly journeys ended sooner than we might have wished.

Our hope is in the Holy Spirit who continues to be generous with the charism, first given to St. Madeleine Sophie and the Society, that still flourishes. Let us pray our thanksgiving for this timeless gift, especially on the Feasts of St. Madeleine Sophie and the Sacred Heart, and let us strengthen one another in times of suffering as “wounded healers” and as resilient creatures loved by God.

The exquisite beauty of the Japanese Spirea on our cover, the brilliance of color, the array of many small flowers within the heart-shaped blossom all came from what were barren branches just a few months ago. How we welcome Spring, this spectacle of creation’s resilience.



With prayer and union in the Heart of Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paula Toner".

Paula Toner, RSCJ
Provincial

Heart Lines

- 4 We are in CANZUS!**
The U.S. province joins Canada and Australia/New Zealand to form a new region
- 5 Philippine goes to Washington**
Women & Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America opens at the Smithsonian
- RSCJ vows in Rome**
Fourteen Religious of the Sacred Heart make final vows
- 6 In Mission for Life**
By Shirley Miller, RSCJ
- 7 In Memoriam**
- 8 Networking in Africa**
How Sacred Heart schools connect with the missions in Uganda and Kenya
- 10 A welcoming parish**
The work of Natalie Rufola, RSCJ in Albany, New York's South End

Features

- 12 Hearts that hold nothing back**
Photographs of the RSCJ mission in Africa by Claire Lorentzen
- 15 Education at Sprout Creek Farm**
A place where students learn from animals and plants, not just about them
- 18 Planting a garden of justice**
Restorative justice in Grand Coteau, Educational justice in Detroit, Labor justice for farm workers by Virginia Nesmith, and Eco-justice now by Joan Kirby, RSCJ

Departments

- 22 Essay: What it means to be an Associate**
By Catherine Kinabrew
- 25 Spirituality: On sacred ground**
By Meg Beugg
- 26 The Poetry Page**

Heart

Heart is published two times a year to highlight the mission and ministries of the Society of the Sacred Heart, U.S. Province, for a wide circle of friends. The covers, photographs of hearts in nature, symbolic of Christ's presence at the heart of the universe, bear witness to the contemplative dimension of the Society's "wholly contemplative, wholly apostolic" mission: to discover and reveal God's love through the service of education.



Photo: @ Nurasha Pnini, Flickr

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 Philippine Duchesne in 1818. For more information about the mission and ministries of the U.S. Province, please visit www.rscj.org.

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We are in CANZUS!



Canada, Australia/New Zealand and the U.S. make up the CANZUS region.

Following the 2008 General Chapter in Peru, a September teleconference brought together – for the first time – RSCJ communities in the U.S. and Canada and chapter delegates from the provinces of Canada, Australia/New Zealand, and the U.S. And the new region of CANZUS took its place among the other geographic regions – composed of provinces – that make up the worldwide Society of the Sacred Heart. Paula Toner, RSCJ, provincial of the U.S., said she is happy that the province has this active, international association with two other provinces that have much in common.

Organizing the RSCJ provinces by region emerged as an organic, grass-roots idea, during the years 2000 to 2008. Communicating province-to-province had already become widespread because of cooperative projects, such as the International Summer Service Program and the interprovincial founding of the mission in Haiti; and the global nature of such projects required collaboration, not just among provinces, but among broader geographic areas of the Society.

The first regions set up were: Europe, the U.S. and Canada, Latin America, Africa, and Asia and Australia/New Zealand (ANZ). Then, in 2005, Anne McGrath, RSCJ, provincial of Australia/New Zealand, proposed that

ANZ link with the provinces of Canada and the U.S. “ANZ had had a sense of isolation for geographic and cultural reasons,” she said. “Joining with the U.S. and Canada would give a new sense of connectedness and build on existing bonds while maintaining strong links with the provinces of Asia.”

Mary Finlayson, RSCJ, provincial of Canada, said: “CANZUS is a natural fit. The three provinces share many of the same concerns for women religious at this time: new vocation strategies, retirement and health care plans, and new modes of governance. As a region, we can share creative resources. How can technology help us to connect and support one another despite the distances?” ❖

Philippine goes to Washington



LCWR History Committee member Mary Charlotte Chandler, RSCJ, with an image of St. Philippine from *Women & Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America*.

Pioneering saint Rose Philippine Duchesne, RSCJ, is among the women religious honored in a history-making exhibit making its way around the country. *Women & Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America*, opened January 14, 2010, in the International Gallery in the Dillon-Ripley Gallery of the Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C.

Women & Spirit is sponsored by the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) in association with the Cincinnati Museum Center. The exhibit, rich in artifacts never before seen by the public, illustrates the impact that Catholic sisters have had on the educational system, health care, and social services in the United States. As midwives to a newly birthed nation, “the nuns” were important contributors at a time when the future was unknown and the present was often dangerous.

Major donors for the exhibit include the Conrad Hilton Fund for Sisters, the Catholic Health Association of the United States, and Catholic Healthcare East. *Women & Spirit* was produced by Seruto & Company, and Bob Weis Design Island led the creative development in collaboration with the LCWR History Committee.

A complete schedule and information can be found at:

www.womenandspirit.org ✦

RSCJ vows in Rome

On January 31, 2010, two RSCJ from the U.S. Province, Kathleen McGrath and Diana Wall, made their final vows at Villa Lante in Rome. They were among fourteen RSCJ from around the world who made final profession – a commitment to religious life which, for an RSCJ, usually occurs after at least nine years of preparation.

Sister McGrath entered the Society of the Sacred Heart in 1999, after receiving her MDiv from the Weston School of Theology in Boston. She has served in the areas of spiritual direction and work with the homeless and will return to the Boston area to work at St. Francis House, a facility for homeless people.

Sister Wall entered in 1997 and earned a B.S. degree in Nursing and a certificate in Public Health Nursing from the University of San Francisco, as well as an MBA from Golden Gate University. She will go to Haiti to help with healthcare efforts there and then plans to put her business and fundraising skills to work in education. ✦



Standing: Mary Cavanagh (probation director), Ania Zamojda (Poland), Anita Nazareth (India), Masembi Mayamba Julienne (DRC)*, Maria Carmen Soler Garcia (Northern Spain), Olaya Mayans Porras (Southern Spain), Ribin Musina (Uganda/Kenya), Karla Nunez Pezo (Peru), Blandine Masosa-Bladilla (DRC), Choi Sung Kyung (Korea), Valeria Kerketta (India), Diana Wall (U.S.), Immaculate Ssiddamwebyo (Uganda/Kenya), Kathy McGrath (U.S.).
Sitting: Kkusu Mbumba Wivine (DRC), Amira Ishak Nessim (Egypt), Dorothee Nzuzi Lungu (DRC), Antonella Aloisi (translator), Kim Young Ae (probation team). *Democratic Republic of Congo

In Mission for Life

... a life's work, not the work of a day...

By Shirley Miller, RSCJ



St. Louis/St. Charles regional campaign planners, left to right: Catherine Schmidt, Molly Hyde, Mary Ciapciak. Campaign chair: Patty Arnold.



As we struggled with the economy this past year, words of Mother Janet Erskine Stuart, superior general, 1911-1914, came to mind:

Do not give up any high aspirations, aim at the very highest and the best, but understand that to get this is a life's work, not the work of a day, so never let discouragement cast down or disappoint you but always begin again with great courage and especially great confidence... God never gives work to do and then takes away the means of doing it!

We are now entering our third year of the Society's *In Mission for Life* campaign. As of January 15, 2010, we have received commitments (annual gifts, major gifts and pledges and realized bequests) of \$17,000,000, or 43% of our \$40,000,000 goal. For each gift, we are indebted to gracious donors and great volunteers.

During 2009, the success of our efforts slowed down as a result of the downturn in national and local economies. However, early planning for the rollout of regional campaigns is now underway in Chicago; Southern California/Arizona; Houston; Maryland/Washington DC; and the Florida coasts. And regional campaigns continue or conclude in the greater San Francisco area; New York/ Connecticut/ New Jersey; Boston/Rhode Island; St. Louis/ St. Charles; New Orleans; and Omaha.



Left: Harriet Switzer and Lillian Conaghan, RSCJ.



Virginia McMonagle, RSCJ, with a Hatian child.

At the last National Development Board meeting, among the tasks identified for the mission advancement office, finance office and province administration were:

- ✓ Continue preparations to expand *In Mission for Life* regional campaigns
- ✓ Develop a strategy that involves mail solicitation of all prospects in each region as that part of the campaign is completed
- ✓ Expand efforts to announce the *Cor Unum Legacy Society* and promote planned giving among alumnae/i, families, and friends
- ✓ Develop initial strategies for approaching major gift prospects who live outside of defined campaign regions
- ✓ Continue to refine the province's donor data base and records.

A significant portion of campaign income has been derived from planned/estate gifts from alumnae/i, families and friends. The launch of the *Cor Unum Society* has provided an opportunity for visits with donors of planned gifts to inform them of the continuing needs of the Society.

Always begin again with great courage

We are deeply grateful for the outpouring of gifts from all around the country and world for our sisters and our mission in Haiti. Hundreds of gifts have come from you and will be used for direct service by our sisters to the people they serve. As of March 19, 2010, a total of 450 gifts have been received in an amount of \$127,573.75.

Gratitude for your support is offered on behalf of the RSCJ who have served or are serving now in Haiti. Among them are: Sisters Suzanne Lasseigne, Virginia McMonagle, Diane Riche, Judy Vollbrecht, and Anita Von Wellsheim (RIP) from the United States; Sisters Ines Calderon (RIP), Josefa Corrada, and Carmen Margarita Fagot from Puerto Rico; Sister Esperanza Calabuig from Chile; and Sister Mathilda Moreno from Spain. ✚

In Memoriam

Please see www.rscj.org
for biographical information
on RSCJ who have died.

**May they live in the fullness
of God's love.**

Catherine (Kay) Baxter
December 25, 2009

Victoria Siu
February 20, 2010

Barbara Bowe
March 14, 2010

Catherine (Kit) Collins
March 18, 2010

Networking in Africa

In her newsletter about the Sacred Heart Primary School (SHPS) in Kyamusansala, Uganda, Irene Cullen, RSCJ, wrote about the ripple effect when a girl child receives an education, saying: "... the benefits ripple out to all facets of communal and national life."

Beneficent ripples also occur among those who help provide that education. For well over a decade, Network schools have been actively supporting the Sacred Heart educational ministry in Africa and, in the process, learning a few things themselves. Present and former Network students have traveled to Africa, including Villa Duchesne alumna Meg Beugg, whose essay appears in this issue of *Heart*, and Greenwich alumna Claire Lorentzen, whose photographs accompany this article and are featured beginning on page 12.

Here is a sampling of more ongoing Network connections in Africa:

Academy of the Sacred Heart, New Orleans (The Rosary)

Each year, Rosary students await the name of and information about their new "classmate" in Uganda. Rosary students in the lower, middle and upper schools have been supporting SHPS students for several years.

Academy of the Sacred Heart, St. Charles

For several years, the Academy of the Sacred Heart, St. Charles has donated



Claire Lorentzen

Students at Laini Saba Primary School wait in line for lunch. Laini Saba is a co-ed primary school inside the Kibera slum of Nairobi, Kenya, administered by the RSCJ. For most students, lunch is the only meal they will eat all day.

two tuitions to SHPS, and the students have also raised funds to help build water purification facilities in Uganda.

Convent of the Sacred Heart, 91st Street

The student-run philanthropy program, *Helping Hearts*, has supported SHPS since 1998 by providing grants to support a variety of building projects. And all proceeds from the annual 91st Street Spring Fair go toward sponsoring student tuitions.

Convent of the Sacred Heart, Greenwich

Each year at Greenwich, lower school girls jump rope for Uganda using jump ropes made of banana leaves by their

"sisters" in Uganda – and the girls in Uganda wear Uganda-Greenwich t-shirts in a special offertory procession.

Duchesne Academy of the Sacred Heart, Houston

Lower school students do chores and donate earnings to pay for tuitions; 5th and 6th graders do acts of service, such as washing dogs, to raise money; and the upper school Community Service Club has held fundraisers including "Bowling for Uganda Night" and "Concert for Uganda."

Paola Balleca, upper school social awareness coordinator, says: "Giving to our sisters in Uganda insures the continuity of Sacred Heart education and of giving hearts for generations to come."

Forest Ridge School of the Sacred Heart

The Computers for Uganda Program was started at Forest Ridge (and is now managed by CSH Greenwich) and the middle school raises money for two full tuitions each year.

Princeton Academy of the Sacred Heart

The Princeton Academy student council contributes to SHPS and pays tuition for one student each year. Princeton students are also establishing relationships with RSCJ from Uganda as well with as the students there.

Sacred Heart Schools, Atherton

Sacred Heart Society, an honor and service society for seniors at Sacred Heart Preparatory; St. Joseph's School, Atherton's elementary and middle school; and several other interest groups around the campus have all raised funds in a variety of creative endeavors for more than nine years for the building of SHPS.

Sacred Heart Schools, Sheridan Road

Academy of the Sacred Heart has raised money for scholarships for approximately ten students at SHPS. And, working with Sister Cullen, a group of Hardey Prep boys in the Environmental Awareness Service program had a bagel sale and sent the money to Uganda students for water filtration.

Schools of the Sacred Heart, Grand Coteau

Both the Academy of the Sacred Heart (ASH) and St. John Berchmans School

sponsor three tuitions at SHPS and receive regular letters and photographs from the students they sponsor. The ASH upper school has also raised funds through Living Water to help with digging wells in Kenya.

Stuart Country Day School of the Sacred Heart

Since 2007, the lower school has sponsored one student at SHPS; and a Stuart family has sponsored another. An all-school drive raised money for a well, sewing machine, and building needs; and the upper school raised \$1400 for tuitions. And, after seeing a video about SHPS*, Annet Nankusu, RSCJ, and Lucy Toror, RSCJ, suggested that Stuart students make a video to share with students in Uganda.

The Regis School of the Sacred Heart

Regis supports tuitions at SHPS, and the students learn all about their sister school and maintain relationships with the girls in Uganda. Each class creates its own project each year to raise funds; even the three-year olds raised over \$300 through the Legos for Love project.

Woodlands Academy of the Sacred Heart

Woodlands raised \$1000 in coins and collected 880 books for the secondary school in Uganda – their Sacred Heart sister school and the only all-girls school in Uganda. Woodlands head of school Gerald Grossman credited the achievement to “a passion for global service and Sacred Heart sisterhood.” ❖



Claire Lorentzen

Students doing their homework at St. Charles Lwanga, a secondary school in Kalungu, a community served by RSCJ.

*Editor's note: The video about SHPS, in which Anne Wachter, RSCJ, describes her 2008 visit, can be viewed at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=mqtWu27yQ40

A WELCOMING



Above: Barbara Quinn, pastoral associate for Christian Service, checks supplies in the food pantry.

Below: Located in southwest Albany, St. John's/St. Ann's Catholic church is a beacon of welcome to people from miles around.

Signs that proclaim “Welcome” abound at St. John’s/St. Ann’s Catholic Church; and the parish community stands whole-heartedly behind those words. This red brick church in Albany, New York’s South End is well known as a beacon of welcome to everyone: young, old, rich, poor, black, white, gay, straight... and its parish membership is not based on geography, but on people who are committed to helping other people. The church building itself exudes life: bright colors, an open shape, beautiful stained glass windows telling the story of Jesus, and a lively, friendly energy that invites people to participate.

Although she came to Albany from New York City, Natalie Runfola, RSCJ, applied to work at this particular parish because she had enjoyed being there twenty years ago – as a pastoral associate who, among other things, handled outreach to seniors; she left Albany to serve on the U. S. Provincial Team. This time, when she applied to the Diocese of Albany, she took all sorts of tests and “felt like I was entering the convent again.” In 2007, she was appointed parish life director by Bishop of Albany, Howard J. Hubbard, who recently commented: “This is a time of opportunity to reach out to more people in more ways than ever before. Sister Runfola’s parish work is a wonderful example of that kind of outreach.”

“It’s my job to be a positive presence to the community of faith,” says the enthusiastic Sister Runfola. “I’m the administrator more than the hands-on outreach person. And right now, we are in the process of merging with another parish, St. James. So the task of holding it all together is a challenging one as we continue to address the needs of this community.”

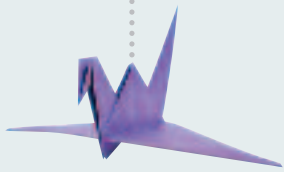
One of the ways community needs are being met is through the St. John’s/St. Ann’s Center, which has been in operation in one form or other since 1837. Like the church, the Center, located right across the street, is also welcoming – from access ramps and doors that open easily, to brightly lit hallways and offices, to the smiling faces on all the volunteers. Barbara Quinn, pastoral associate for Christian Service, directs the Center and says it is a “safe place where most of us (volunteers and staff) know everyone by name.”

The Center operates a food pantry, clothing program, and furniture program in addition to providing holiday food baskets and the popular Welcome Tables on Tuesday and Saturday. Ah, those Welcome Tables! About 200 people show up every time meals are served, and it’s not just the food that attracts them. Everyone involved is committed to peace and justice, including the people who set up the tables and sweep the floors; and volunteers come from parishes as far as

PARISH

The work of Natalie Runfola, RSCJ in Albany, New York's South End

Photographs by Anthony Salamone



twenty miles away, from all over the Albany area, to serve people in this impoverished area of the city.

Welcome Table volunteers sit and eat with the guests; it's a served meal, and everyone is considerate of others, whether waiting in line to be seated or passing the potatoes. One volunteer decorates the hall according to the season. Another woman likes to make goody packets to distribute to the guests; "something to make the meal special" she says. Even the junior high kids who volunteer say they can't wait to come again. And one patron brings his checkerboard faithfully and is yet to be beaten! "We do not deny anyone a meal," Ms. Quinn says, "It's stick-to-your-ribs food, and the meatloaf is always the favorite."

Parishioners and volunteers at St. John's/St. Ann's say their community does things that may not be typical, that people there don't just talk about their faith, and that it's about "how they live between Sundays." One parishioner said everyone is treated like family and that they are noticed; and another said that St. John's/St. Ann's is the first church where he felt truly welcome.

In July 2010, the parish will merge with St. James, a neighboring parish, and the new parish will then be known as St. Francis of Assisi. Whatever the new community is called, a heart-filled welcome is sure to be offered to all who wish to be part of it. ✦



Above: Bright colors and a spiral of origami cranes invite parishioners into the church.



Left: Natalie Runfola, RSCJ, parish life director at St. John's/St. Ann's.



HEARTS THAT HOLD NOTHING BACK

Text and photographs by
Claire Lorentzen

In the summer of 2008, I received a grant from Stanford University to photograph the work of the Religious of the Sacred Heart throughout Uganda and Kenya. I visited eleven different convents and communities; four were schools, and the others served as missions for HIV/AIDS care, pastoral work, prisons, women, and peacemaking.

continued

Above left: Recess at Laini Saba Primary School in Nairobi, Kenya.

Above right: Reading class at Sacred Heart Primary School in Kyamusansala, Uganda.

Large photo right: A painting of Mater inspires students in the multi-purpose assembly hall of the Sacred Heart Primary School building; practice exams, meals, and other school gatherings are held there.



Inspired by my own Sacred Heart education, I had the opportunity to use photography as a means to witness the selfless lives and work of the honorable women religious of the Society of the Sacred Heart. In all locations, I was as openly welcomed to sit beside them at the dinner table at the end of each day and share a meal and laugh, as if I were a sister or family.

From a school sitting on the top of a hill in Greenwich, Connecticut, I traveled to one on top of a hill in Kyamusansala, Uganda. One school sits at the top of one of the most privileged societies in the world, and the other at one of the poorest. The gap between them is monumental; but somehow as I arrived at the top of that Ugandan hill, looked out into the countryside and then back at the brick Sacred Heart Primary School, I immediately felt connected to the sisters, the students, and their country. We are all part of the international Sacred Heart community.

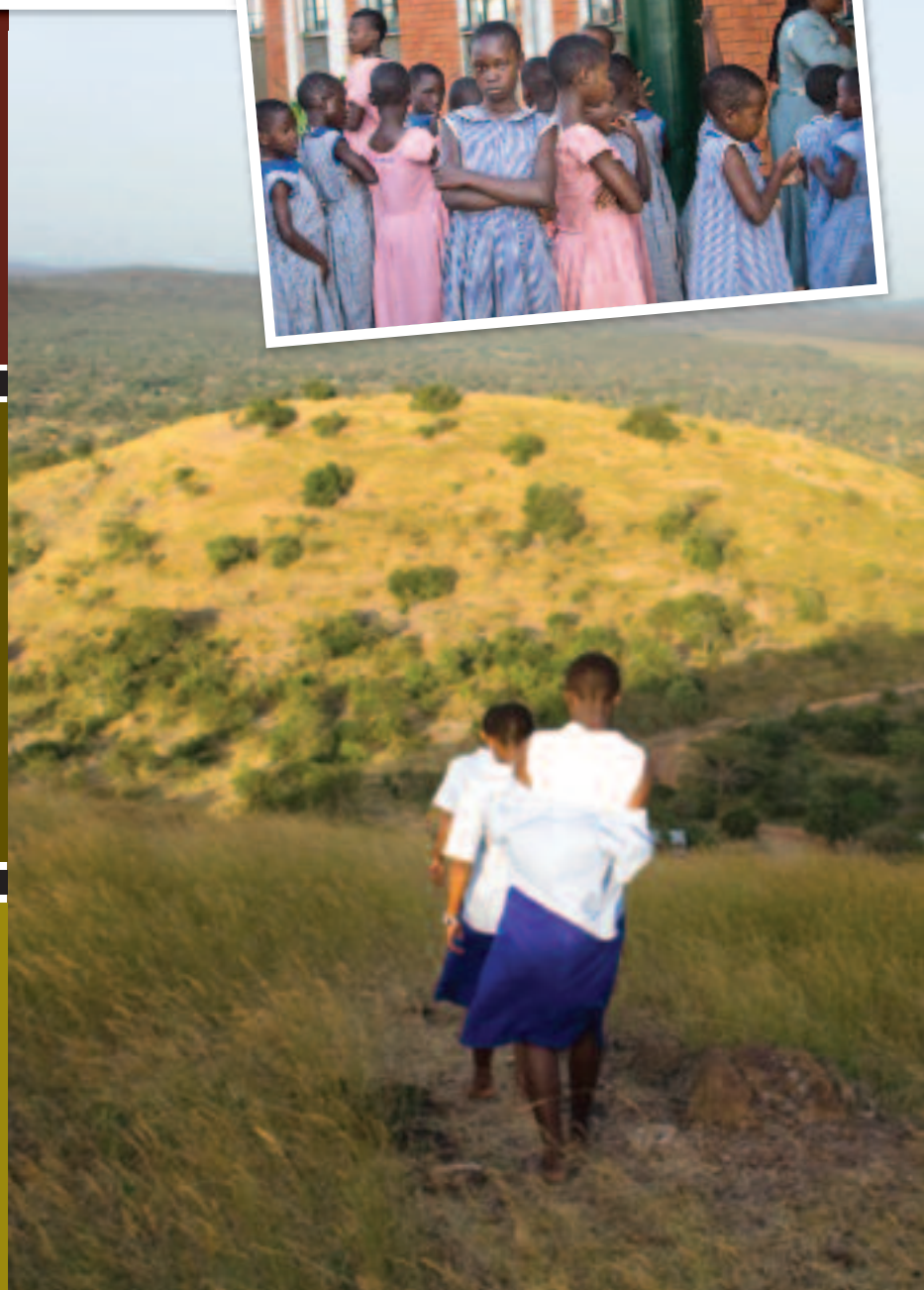
I hope that these photographs shine light on how deeply and fully the Religious of the Sacred Heart have dedicated their lives to serving. They serve out of a love for God... and they inspire hope for some of the most desperate situations through their profound care for everyone, from the simple individual to all of humanity. ✝

Claire Lorentzen is an alumna of Convent of the Sacred Heart, Greenwich. Her work may be viewed at: www.clairelorentzen.com.

Top: At Laini Saba Primary School, the soccer ball is made of plastic bags crunched together and wrapped with twine.

Middle: Students line up outside the main school building at Laini Saba Primary School.

Bottom: Three students make their way across the Uganda hills.





"...looking into the eyes
of our fellow creatures..."

Students learn
from the animals
and plants, not
just about them

education at *Sprout Creek Farm*



Each season brings deeper
understanding of our relationship
with all of creation.

Educational programs at Sprout Creek Farm are conducted close to the earth God created – in open fields of growing lettuce, beans, and potatoes; in pastures where cows and goats and sheep reside; and in a creamery where students of all ages can make the connection between the grass that grows, the cow that moos, and the delicious cheese made by RSCJ and sold locally and nationally. But the curriculum involves far more than just petting the animals, making cheese, and growing vegetables...

Photographs by Georgie Blaeser, RSCJ

... reconnect with the cycles of nature... connect people with their own interior lives, and with God.

Summer Program students harvest cabbage and lettuce – after the weeding and the watering.



Above: Milking is one of the daily chores at Sprout Creek Farm, where approximately fifty cows reside, half of which are “milkers.”

Below: Auracana chickens lay multi-colored eggs ranging from olive green to pink!

According to Margo Morris, RSCJ, the real-world education at Sprout Creek Farm takes place on many levels. “It’s not just the science and the math,” she says. “People who come to Sprout Creek are able to really learn what life is all about, to look into the eyes of our fellow creatures, to spend time weeding and composting, and to reconnect with the cycles of nature.” And, she says: “Those cycles for planting and letting seeds develop, for growing and harvesting, connect people with their own interior lives, and with God.”

For the past twenty years, Sprout Creek Farm in Poughkeepsie, New York, has been introducing students to an environment that in itself can be called teacher. Three elements combine to offer those with “eyes to see and ears to hear” an experience of what it means to live on this planet. First, the farm itself shows observers how animal husbandry works (yes, someone must rise and shine daily to feed those cows and goats!), what organic gardening requires (there are no spray-on pesticides so careful watch must be kept), and the do’s and don’ts of field and pasture management along with the “unmanaged” world of nature. The Creamery and Market element introduces concepts about production and sales and brings “the farm” to the city folk. By

observing how milk is made into cheese, wool into yarn, and livestock into meat, observers see the connections firsthand. Informal classes then link lessons in agriculture and economics to such issues as equitable allocation of the world’s resources.

Relocated and renamed Sprout Creek Farm in 1990, this place of natural learning was first called The Farm in 1982 and located on the campus at Convent of the Sacred Heart (CSH), Greenwich, Connecticut. Created by Sister Morris, Suzanne Rogers, RSCJ, and Father Darrold Endres, the chaplain then employed at CSH, The Farm was designed for the purpose of having teenagers connect what they learned in their regular science and literature classes with a hands-on nature experience; it would function as a living laboratory to revive their sense of wonder and inspire the kind of questioning that could lead to social change – and open the spirit and heart to God.

Now, educational programs at Sprout Creek Farm include students of almost all ages and continue to open minds and hearts.

Saturday programs, for example, are open to boys and girls, age 6-11. Each Saturday is filled with seasonal farm and homesteading activities, such as feeding animals (goats, cows, sheep, chickens, pigs, and ducks),

baking bread or churning butter, planting seedlings, watering, and spreading compost. Participants also learn about farm animals and plants – including bees and bugs – and help with routine farm chores such as milking, moving hay or cleaning pens.

In the summer, numerous educational activities are underway including the Institute for Social and Environmental Awareness (ISEA), a program for Network school students that comprises ten full days of making connections between “pastures of plenty” and places where Mother Earth needs to be better taken care of. Students who come to Sprout Creek Farm and experience the connection between its life and theirs, between their life and those they might serve in shelters or soup kitchens, can see for themselves the reality of issues such as homelessness and hunger.

As Sister Morris says: “Animals may ruminate, but we humans need time to reflect as well! We are all a community of learners who are always in the process of remembering who we are and how we fit in with every other creature. Sprout Creek Farm is an experiential component of the concepts taught in every Sacred Heart school. And I am happy to be part of this particular effort to make known the love of God through the education of youth.”

Sisters Margo Morris, Georgie Blaeser, and Anne Byrne cordially invite students of any age to come and spend some time at Sprout Creek. Accommodations are available, and there is always something interesting going on. Complete information can be found on the webpage, and, if anyone has not yet heard the mooing cow, please log on right now!

www.sproutcreekfarm.org ❖



Taking a little break at the farm, from left: Georgie Blaeser, RSCJ, Pocket (the goat), and Margo Morris, RSCJ.

a day at *Sprout Creek Farm*

Rise and shine at 5:30 a.m. for chores at 6 a.m. Groups of five or so are divided up for different chores:

1. Milking and feeding goats
2. Milking and feeding cows
3. Feeding calves, kids, lambs, sheep, pigs, turkeys, chickens
4. Gardening and harvesting
5. Meal preparation for breakfast

And everyone cleans his/her own environment (sweeping, mopping, etc.)

Breakfast

Morning meeting or seminar depending on age group

Projects: planting, building, repairing, moving hay, cleaning barns

Lunch

One hour of rest/reading/journal writing

Art or construction project, bread baking, butter or cheese making

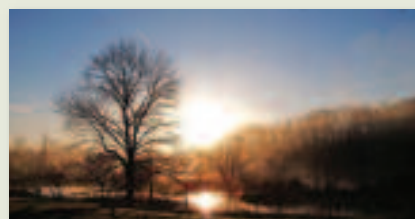
Swim in the creek

Afternoon chores same as morning – with food harvest and dinner preparation

Dinner

Evening activity: guided night hike or swim in creek, campfire with songs and s'mores, discussions, games

9:30 p.m. Sleep



RESTORATIVE JUSTICE IN GRAND COTEAU

For over thirty-five years, the Thensted Center in Grand Coteau, Louisiana, has focused on human needs and brought people together in productive collaboration. A recent volunteer called it a place of “restorative justice.”

Megan Skinner, a volunteer from the University of Notre Dame wrote: “Restorative justice is about putting right social injustices...focusing on the needs, obligations, and collaboration of all involved...the Thensted Center brings together the community – not only kids for the summer program, but the vulnerable people, including the elderly and the mentally disabled.”

Betty Renard, RSCJ, agrees wholeheartedly. “It’s exactly what we do,” said Sister Renard. “Thensted Center operates primarily on faith, donations, and a few small grants, and the work we do is clearly at the heart of our call, first articulated by St. Madeleine Sophie, to work for justice.”

The Religious of the Sacred Heart have always responded to their call to provide outreach services in the communities where they are teaching, working, and living. Thensted Center was begun by Margaret Hoffman, RSCJ, who started a ministry to the poor in St. Landry Parish that included the municipalities of Leonville, Arnaudville, Sunset, Bellevue, and Grand Coteau. Now, in addition to operating Schools of the Sacred Heart for 488 students in Grand Coteau, the RSCJ are actively involved in serving the needs of the poor throughout the area.

The Center addresses such needs as: food, clothing, and household items available through a thrift store; an after-school tutorial program; educational and social activities for senior citizens; counseling services; a money management program for adults; bringing the Eucharist to the homebound or ill; and, in this area, which provides no activities for youth, a summer enrichment program that offers safe, productive



The Thensted Center Summer Enrichment Program offers recreation for Grand Coteau children – as well as education.

education and recreation for children.

Named for Father Cornelius J. Thensted, SJ, the Center is run by two local women, two RSCJ, and numerous volunteers. Mrs. Julia Richard, Thensted’s director, has been with the Center since 1989; assistant director Geraldine Jones has been plant manager and trouble shooter since 1984; Alice Mills, RSCJ, offers counseling services and has worked at the Center since 1991; and Betty Renard, RSCJ, who operates the senior citizen program and visits the homebound, has been at Thensted for over a decade.

Commenting on the philosophy of service that animates the Center, Sister Renard notes that restorative justice can work both ways: “My attraction is to give the heart of Christ to the needy. But I often realize that God is already present, and so in our interaction, we become a gift to one another. Many of these folks who have suffered so much deprivation are resilient and rich in the things of God.” ✦

EDUCATIONAL JUSTICE IN DETROIT

Detroit has had its share of urban upheavals. Throughout those cycles, especially when many residents were left without material resources, the Society of the Sacred Heart engaged in activities to educate the underserved people of Detroit. Education as an act of justice holds true particularly when people are without jobs – and low on confidence.

Annette Zipple, RSCJ, says the educational outreach work in Detroit has been all about helping people find their voices.



Annette Zipple, RSCJ

And she points to two ground-breaking programs that have done just that: SHEP and SWEEP.

SHEP, the Sacred Heart Enrichment Program, started in 1966 at the Academy of the Sacred Heart, Grosse Pointe, as a four-week program for 7th and 8th grade girls from the inner city. The program was created to prepare students for high school, and the education comprised three elements: character development, cultural enrichment, and academics. Most important, SHEP was based on respect and designed so that each student could become aware of her personal worth.

Over the years, the SHEP creative spirit energized thousands of young girls in Detroit and inspired an amazing movement toward building bridges of communication and service to link diverse groups and communities.

Although SHEP ended in 2006, its legacy continues; and a video about the program (*Art at the Heart*, produced for SHEP by Juanita Anderson) is being screened in schools and urban centers around the country.

SWEEP, the Southwest Women's Education and Empowerment Program, was initiated in 1996 when a group of RSCJ, led by Sisters Zipple and Martha Curry, got together in a Detroit living room to determine how best to meet the educational needs of women in Southwest Detroit. A partnership with Madonna University was discussed,

a minimum number of students (twelve) was decided upon, and the first class – in the 1998-99 academic year – comprised twenty-seven students. The program has continued and grown, and the campus offers a supportive environment where students benefit from the community of fellow learners. In addition to college degree and certificate programs in social work, early childhood development, and general education, SWEEP activities include tutoring, academic advising, academic workshops, and writing assistance.

In 2004, SWEEP published a book of poems and reflections called *Women of Southwest Detroit*; the following passage describes what this kind of education can accomplish:

My life is not over, so I believe my spirit is still collecting light. It is glowing but it is not bright. It is taking on many forms and protecting my life with my memories: One of my childhood, one of my youth, one of my loves, and one of my age. In saving each one for my children, they will remember who I am and what I believed in.

— Carmen R. Romero

Sister Zipple says over fifty women have graduated from SWEEP, despite the fact that for some, a degree can take six years of commitment. “Some can only come twice a week,” she says. “But they persevere. They work all day, get supper on the table, arrange for child care – and show up for class until 9:30 at night. And I see a transformation soon after they get into the process.”

She says women go into the program first to get a better job. “They know they can earn more money if they have a degree,” she says. “But then the children are so proud of their mothers... and the women really ‘get it’ about the significance of the next generation.”

Thus the seeds of education are planted. Through programs like SHEP and SWEEP, children and adults discover their inherent gifts and are inspired to go further and learn more. As they do, they are better able to find both jobs – and justice. ❖

LABOR JUSTICE FOR FARM WORKERS

By Virginia Munsch Nesmith

Did you eat today? If you had orange juice for breakfast, a salad for lunch, or milk with dinner, a farm worker touched your life.

Nearly two million men, women, and children work daily in fields, orchards, nurseries, and feed lots in the United States. They work hard – and the bounty of their labor overflows our supermarket shelves and fills our dining tables.

Although the majority of our food now comes from corporate agricultural interests, without farm workers – the people who harvest the crops and feed the animals – those multibillion dollar enterprises would not survive. Yet farm workers are among the most exploited workers in the country. A tomato picker in Florida must pick nearly two tons to earn \$50; a woman climbing a ladder for oranges makes less than \$1 for a ninety-pound sack. Farm workers suffer toxic pesticide exposure, frequently live in decrepit conditions, and often lack sanitary facilities or clean drinking water in the fields. Every year, they die heat-related deaths, the women endure sexual harassment, and some are held in “debt bondage” or modern-day slavery.

As director of the National Farm Worker Ministry (NFWM) – a faith-based organization that works for justice for farm workers and is supported by the Society of the Sacred Heart – I am committed to improving those conditions. The NFWM educates people about farm workers through presentations and visits to the fields. Then we offer ways to help, such as writing letters to companies or legislators, participating in prayer vigils, supporting boycotts, or purchasing “fair food.” Together with conscious consumers, we have helped: pass a law on the West Coast requiring water and breaks when it is excessively hot; improve housing regulations on the East Coast so that beds have mattresses and toilets have



Farm workers' families feed everyone's families.

privacy walls, and win national labor agreements that provide better wages and treatment.

Through the NFWM, I have met many courageous women – and men – such as the woman I shall call Maria, to protect her privacy. Maria was a plant nursery worker who suffered ongoing pain from severe pesticide burns she received at work; she had received no medical care or help from the company. But Maria did not give up. She told her story over and over until people like you and me helped her get the assistance she deserved and worked with her to ensure that others did not have the same experience. But we have a long way to go.

To keep the improvements going, the NFWM operates nationally and locally, with staff in several states, and is supported by thousands of individuals, congregations, and organizations. Over thirty national member groups have representation on our board, including the Society of the Sacred Heart, my first mentors in social justice.

When I was a student at Villa Duchesne, my life was touched by inspiring teachers – particularly Betsy Hartson, RSCJ, who was passionate about the poor and “social awareness which compels to action” – and by the legacy of strong women in the Sacred Heart community. I left Villa empowered to change the world; and the farm workers have touched my life and given me the opportunity to put that power to work. I am very grateful to both. ✦

Virginia Munsch Nesmith is an alumna of Villa Duchesne, St. Louis, who became interested in helping farm workers over thirty years ago and has served as executive director of the National Farm Worker Ministry for the past twelve years. She invites Heart readers to learn more at www.nfwm.org.

ECO-JUSTICE NOW

By Joan Kirby, RSCJ



At the 2010 Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen, from left: Lily Schwabe, UN assistant representative from the Temple of Understanding; Wangari Matthai, 2004 Nobel Peace Prize winner and founder of the Green Belt Movement in Kenya; Joan Kirby, RSCJ.

Climate change is already affecting the United States – the poor in Louisiana are still recovering from Katrina, Texans lost homes during hurricane Ike, and many Californians lost everything during mudslides and fires. Los Angeles may be out of water in twenty years; and, with a sea level rise of one meter, most of the mid-Atlantic coastal wetlands from New York to North Carolina will be lost. Increasingly heavy downpours, rising temperatures and sea levels, thawing permafrost, longer ice-free seasons in the ocean, lakes and rivers, earlier snowmelt, and alterations in river flows are all danger signs. (Source: US Global Research Program)

The issue of global warming is only part of the picture. As we observe polluted air and water and the extinction of numerous species of animal and plant life, we need to understand and make the connection that we humans are being adversely affected as well. It is time to demand Eco-Justice for all.

Back in February, Thomas J. Reese, SJ, senior fellow, Woodstock Theological Center, Georgetown University, wrote on his blog: “Because of global warming, humanity is heading pell-mell toward an ecological cataclysm that will make the Haitian disaster pale to insignificance.”

So how does one even begin to demand Eco-Justice?

- Begin by acknowledging that, because the world’s richest nations have contributed more to climate change, they have a greater responsibility to take action – and to do it quickly.
- Recognize the devastating impacts on women, children, and indigenous peoples in developing nations. They did not cause the climate crisis, yet they are suffering more from drought and flooding.
- Call on Congress and the Administration to respect human rights and take action to reduce risks to vulnerable populations. Do not allow the Senate to defer discussion of legislation crucial to U.S. acceptance of environmental responsibility.

Our lifestyle has to change as well. It is time for us to drive hybrid cars, fly less frequently, compost and recycle our trash, enjoy three-minute showers, and avoid bottled water.

It is time to remember our connection to those who will follow us. If we ignore the changes in climate, the developing world and generations of children and grandchildren will suffer the consequences.

And it is time to recognize our need for the next revolution in human history. The great eco-theologian Thomas Berry called this the Ecological Age, and called us to step up to our responsibilities as citizens of the cosmos.

The good news from Copenhagen was that agreements and money were provided to permit rainforest nations to replant trees to absorb dangerous carbon emissions; but, sadly, the politicking, competing, and lobbying were prevalent enough to discourage even the most hopeful among us. The smallest and most vulnerable states made it clear that even the Kyoto Protocol, the only legally binding agreement available, was not strong enough to save their peoples and cultures from flooding or parching.

A century of the industrial age has enabled and approved human dominance of the earth’s life systems. However, our consciousness is in a process of transformation. Copenhagen may not have sealed the necessary agreements, but there is no doubt that the world is now aware that we must change our ways of living – the elephant is moving. For the sake of our humanity, the time is now for Eco-Justice. ✦

Joan Kirby, RSCJ, a representative to the United Nations from the Temple of Understanding in New York City, works closely with the U.N. on the Millennium Development Goals to eradicate poverty in the world. She attended the 2010 Climate Conference in Copenhagen and agreed to speak out in Heart about this critical issue because, unless we have a stable environment, clean air, and sufficient water, other issues of social justice are moot.

What it means to be an Associate

By Catherine Kinabrew

“The Associates of the Sacred Heart are lay women and men who are attracted by and live the spirituality of the Society of the Sacred Heart. With the Religious of the Sacred Heart (RSCJ) they discover and make known the love of the heart of Jesus. They give witness to the love of God expressed in Jesus, in humanity, and in creation – a love that calls them to collaborate in God’s transformation of their lives and the world around them.”

— Associate Identity Statement 2008



At the January 2010 Associates National Committee Weekend in New Orleans: Associates National Committee Chair Catherine Kinabrew (left) and Anne Byrne, RSCJ.

The Associate Identity Statement, as well as the information at <http://rscjassociates-usa.org>, describes the Associates of the Sacred Heart. Here, I would like to offer a personal account of what being an Associate means to me.

My search for a closer relationship with God began one morning in 1989. I was at Mass with Shirley Miller, RSCJ, at The Rosary in New Orleans; it was the feast of St. Augustine. For the first time I wanted to know what he really meant by: “Our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee, O Lord.” Since that questioning moment – and thanks to Sister Miller’s gentle mentoring over the past twenty years – I have known a most extraordinary journey into the heart of God through the Society of the Sacred Heart.

Along the way, Sister Miller listened with openness, patience, and humor and introduced me to many RSCJ friends. Each one said the same thing: you will know the work of the Spirit by what will happen. And each was willing to search with me. I began to feel a connection, a spiritual comfort zone, that I realized had been around since my days as a student at The Rosary. Much to my surprise, I wanted to spend more time in that spiritual place. Over time that desire has evolved into the relationship with the RSCJ so that I can now call myself “Associate of the Sacred Heart.”

There is no doubt in my mind that this new journey was inspired by St. Madeleine Sophie, and that being an Associate is tailor-made for people like me who want to live spiritual lives as Sophie did – open to the movement of God, committed to personal prayer, and able to look at life through the lens of love.

Of course, Sophie’s way is also about action. I teach in a public school, where my mission is to celebrate the heart of each child buried somewhere among all those test scores, to somehow be that “angel voice” who can be heard. Fortunately, first graders have a way of reminding me that God is never absent. Last Christmas, I received a letter from one of my more precocious little girls, hastily folded, and written in a scrawled print. But the message was profound.

With her classmates seated at her feet, she read:

I am an angel. I've come to say to my class
and my teacher that Christmas
is all most here. So, class, listen to
me... Now everyone knows that God's son
is Jesus, at least my class does.
Let's learn about God and Jesus.
Did you know that Jesus' birthday
is on Christmas?

You can imagine how I smiled. Even a six-year-old can know what it means to "give witness to the love of God expressed in Jesus... a love that calls them to collaborate in God's transformation of their lives and the world around them."

Sharing the Charism

Including lay people in the heart of the Society has been around since the days of Sophie. Although I personally had not heard of the *Affiliées* (women who shared the spirituality of the Society with RSCJ, from 1869 to 1986) or the *Chaine d'Âmes* (a group of women who offered to help in Jesus' work of love), many connections for lay people with the Sacred Heart charism have always been available. One important group is the Children of Mary, a sodality begun by Sophie in 1818, which is active today around the world. However, it was not until the 1980s that the Society considered having non-vowed people in the U.S. share the charism as Associates.

In 1985, Sister Mary Ann Foy, RSCJ, visited groups of Religious of the Sacred Heart in the U.S. to get a sense of whether the lay people they knew wanted to know more about the Society's charism. She was delighted to find that RSCJ wanted to address the comprehensive reality of "Associates in mission," and she commented on the need to get behind the movement of the Spirit in the laity to produce "a future yet unknown." She wrote: "If anything is clear to me, it is that God is in this process. I feel



Gumbo: a rich blend of life experiences, improving with age and the TLC of each cook, working on this feast called life.

urgently that my own task is simply to *name* and *bless* the experience, nothing more."

Associates groups were not formalized until the 1990s; the 1994 General Chapter encouraged the movement. "We have this deep conviction that our spirituality does not belong only to us," wrote Sister Foy, quoting the Chapter. "It is a gift to be shared, a treasure others help us to discover. With them we want to continue to search how to live and to express it for today..."

Currently there are 130 Associates in twelve locations around the U.S. led by RSCJ coordinators along with Associates. The Associates are drawn to relationships nurtured by Sophie's vision – in twenty-first century language – of relationships that move them into deeper and more personal faith journeys. The Associates have evolved by simply letting grace happen... with the Holy Spirit at the helm.

For anyone who may be interested in becoming an Associate, a good first step is to spend some time with an Associates group. You will learn about the charism and know it when you meet the people. Spend some time in prayer and in openness to letting the Spirit lead. You will know if there is a connection, a deep comfort zone as you "let grace happen." Personally, it took me a long while to feel comfortable with the prayer step of the journey,

Being an Associate is tailor-made for people like me who want to live spiritual lives as Sophie did.



Above: At the Associates National Committee Weekend, from left: Sharon Karam, RSCJ; Frances Dickey, Associate; Muriel Cameron, RSCJ



Below: Members of the Associates National Committee, Anne Wentz, RSCJ, (left) Marianne Basila, Associate

but I learned that it is all about spending more time with God. In the process, like me, you may discover your spiritual voice through a new kind of friendship, steeped in serious commitment and lighthearted joy!

Why Me

Why am I an Associate? I feel certain that this journey is a calling, a vocation. I did not look for it; it found me. I was surrounded by RSCJ friends and working in a vibrant Network school. My journey started with the invitation to

friendship and Eucharist. Along the way I have learned how Sophie's holistic vision speaks to my own search for integrity – how my inner search for peace and my outer work merge into one. I am grateful for the privilege to be Sophie's lens of love and to join so many in that mission.

Oh, yes, my heart is still restless as I face a "future yet unknown." Yet I have the incredible gift of an open space in the heart of the Society, in the heart of God – that relationship called Associate of the Sacred Heart. I have been blessed with RSCJ and Associates who have become friends in the deepest sense because we have "Got God!" I often say, "It just doesn't get any better than that!"

I especially like the way the Houston Associates recently described themselves... as a gumbo – just imagine that delicious Southern flavor! They wrote: "The Associates program is like an extended family... we have members from different countries and backgrounds... drawn together by our search for God through our laughter and common prayer. So what is our personality or flavor? Gumbo: a rich blend of life experiences, improving with age and the TLC of each cook, working on this feast called life." ❖

Rosary alumna Catherine Kinabrew has been an Associate since 1999. She teaches first grade in the New Orleans area, and she and her husband are delighted by their five children and six grandchildren. Mrs. Kinabrew is currently writing a history of the Associates of the Sacred Heart.



July 7-11, 2010

Celebrating Sacred Heart Spirituality & Mission in a Globalized World

For further information:

www.rscj.org/news/province/spirituality-conference-2010

On sacred ground

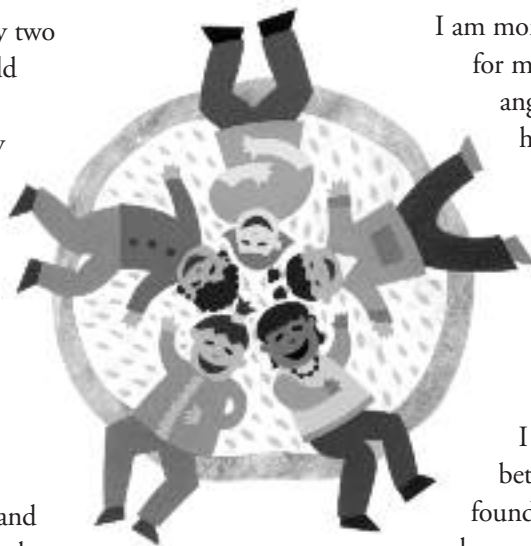
By Meg Beugg

My heart has been touched by two Sacred Heart boarding schools half a world apart: Sacred Heart Primary School in Kyamusansala, Uganda, and the Academy of the Sacred Heart in Grand Coteau, Louisiana.

Sacred Heart Primary School (SHPS), founded in 2003, is one of the newest Sacred Heart schools; and the Academy of the Sacred Heart in Grand Coteau, founded in 1821, is the oldest continuously run Sacred Heart school in the world.

At SHPS, the girls do their wash by hand and simply lay their clothes out to dry on the grass; in the boarding school in Grand Coteau, on the other hand, learning how to do laundry using a washer and a dryer can be a challenge! In one school, a \$475 scholarship pays for a girl's education, books, room and board, uniform, and play clothes; at the other, that amount covers less than a week.

After the first day of my visit to SHPS, I wrote: "It is God's great grace that has given me this opportunity." And in my current role as boarding school head in Grand Coteau, I continue to experience this grace. It is most especially through the girls in Kyamusansala and Grand Coteau that I am able to discover and make known the love of the heart of Christ. Through their stories I have become more aware of my own story. Through our mutual laughter, I am reminded of how much God delights in us. Through their sharing of their love for family and friends at home,



Through our mutual laughter, I am reminded of how much God delights in us.

I am more deeply connected with my own love for my family and friends. Through their anger and frustration, I am reminded of how much I have grown – or still need to – over my forty-one years of life.

Through their appreciation for their education, I am continually renewed in my gratitude and appreciation for the wisdom of Sacred Heart education.

Despite the surface differences, I have found significant similarities between the two schools. Both were founded by Religious of the Sacred Heart, whose vast courage and faith in God inspire me; the dedicated lay teachers and RSCJ at both schools are living out the vision of St. Madeleine Sophie. The girls in both boarding schools laugh, sing, learn, pray, dance, run, squeal with delight, and miss their families. In both places, the girls are loved, challenged and praised. They occasionally get in trouble and are encouraged to make better choices. Sometimes they can break your heart. Both schools are in remote, rural locations – and in both, I have felt I was on sacred ground. ✝

Meg Beugg is an Associate and an alumna of Villa Duchesne, St. Louis. In 2008, she was one of eight Sacred Heart educators to participate in the Ugandan Mission Immersion Pilot Program organized by Irene Cullen, RSCJ; and in 2009, she moved to Grand Coteau to serve as boarding school head at Academy of the Sacred Heart.

Poems

Written by Religious of the Sacred Heart



Over the years, many Religious of the Sacred Heart, notably Janet Erskine Stuart, have written poetry. Many of the poems might be considered prayers.

Beginning with this issue of *Heart*, a page dedicated to RSCJ poems will alternate with The Book Page. For this first poetry page, *Gratefulness*, from a book of poems called *AHIMSA*, seemed appropriate.

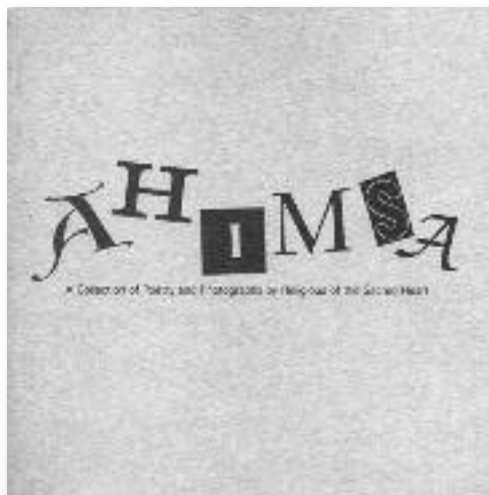
Thank you Sister Schadewald!

Gratefulness

I SING IN GRATEFULNESS
I SING IN GREAT-FULLNESS

The stars are stars,
Water is water
And cannot itself be a star
I sing in great-fullness
Of the blessings of God
Earth and air and fire,
This planet bluegreen
New to the ways of human life
I sing in great-fullness
That I am here
To be part of it all—
To know the sound of falling rain
To hear the silence of snow

Sandra Schadewald, RSCJ



AHIMSA is a Hindu word meaning non-violence, respect for life and a philosophical principle based on an ultimate harmony in the universe.

This book of poems and photographs by English-speaking RSCJ was published for the Society's bicentennial year under the guidance of four RSCJ in the U.S. Province: Carol Bialock, Georgie Blaeser, Joan Gannon, and Gin O'Meara. The Center for Educational Design and Communication in Washington, D.C. designed and printed *AHIMSA*.



Women of prayer

*making God's love visible
in the heart of the world*

› *Become a member.*

Contact: Mary Pat White, RSCJ
vocation@rscj.org

› *Become an Associate.*

Contact: Anne Byrne, RSCJ
abyrne@rscj.org

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Contact: Shirley Miller, RSCJ
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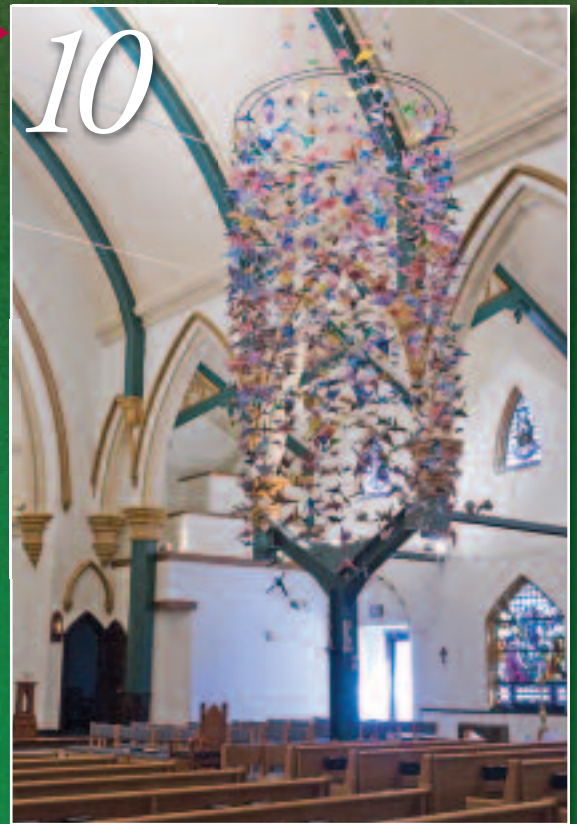
A spiral of colorful origami cranes is only one of the signs that St. John's/St. Ann's is **A welcoming parish.**

Education at Sprout Creek Farm

is based on learning from animals and plants as well as about them.



Georgie Blaeser, RSCJ



Anthony Salamone

Shoeless or not, at Sacred Heart schools in Uganda and Kenya, students, teachers, and photographer Claire Lorentzen have **Hearts that hold nothing back.**



Claire Lorentzen