



Heart

Summer 2008

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

...to Heart

Dear Friends,

The Feast of the Sacred Heart was celebrated in a special way this year at Kenwood as we marked 150 years of the ministry of the Society of the Sacred Heart on the Kenwood campus. In my homily on that occasion, I referred to two images that have nourished our spirituality over these many years.

The statue of the Sacred Heart in the noviceship room at Kenwood and in many schools of the Network portrays Jesus with arms outstretched, reflecting the attitudes of the readings for this day. “Come to me, all you who are weary and are heavy burdened.” (Mt 11: 25-30) “Come, I have chosen you to be my people, my treasured possession. Come—I have set my heart on you.” (Deut 7:6-11) Such an invitation brought generations of young women to Kenwood to begin their lives as Religious of the Sacred Heart. There they were invited to contemplate, learn from and live the attitudes of Jesus’ heart, a love outstretched to welcome everyone, with gentle care and deep compassion, courage and purpose, embracing the world. This open heart became a symbol of the habits of heart we were to live throughout our lives.

As we prepare to leave Kenwood and complete the transition of our eldercare in Albany and California, we have been invited to draw on the core images of our charism, to discover, receive, and share the aspect of love that God most wants to reveal to us now. We have drawn comfort and inspiration from the open heart of Jesus. At the same time, we have also been nourished by another image used for the feast of the Sacred Heart—John 19—the piercing of the side of Jesus. In this image,

Left: The statue of the Sacred Heart at Kenwood.

Right: Crucifix in the chapel of our Motherhouse in Rome.



reflected in the crucifix in the chapel of our Motherhouse in Rome, we see a love that has known conflict and suffering, a love that has been faithful. We see a piercing that opens the core of Jesus’ being—in heart-breaking pain and heart-wrenching love—a piercing from which pours forth water of new life.

This too is the call of our charism—to be God’s love there where the piercing of the heart takes place, there where the waters of new life spring forth. How often have our hearts been touched, and at times pierced, as we experienced woundedness in ourselves, in others, in our world. And how often have we been graced to be part of the love that transforms suffering into new hope and joy.

Years of living such love have been a source of strength for us at this time, as our elder sisters move to a “new world,” as we accept with sadness our leaving Kenwood. Already we have witnessed waters of life for our sisters at the Teresian House health care facility in Albany. And we trust that such waters will continue to flow from these transitions.

As we renewed our vows this year we did so with a particular sense of commitment to living with hearts wide open to embrace the future, with hearts pierced by love and by pain, that God may continue to pour forth waters of new life. ✚

With love in God’s heart,

Kathleen Conan, RSCJ

Kathleen Conan, RSCJ



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Long the Ages, a new choral music CD from the chapel of Kenwood Convent of the Sacred Heart, produced by Sisters Meg Canty, Joan Gannon and Rose-Marie Quilter, is available for \$20 each or \$15 for orders of 15 or more. All proceeds go to the retirement fund. Orders may be placed at: www.shop@wmht.org or by calling 1-800-950-9648.

Heart

Heart is published three 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: mating damselfly © senelliorphotography

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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Social scientist sifts through information and reflects on it with a faith-filled heart



There is a fire that burns in Mary Charlotte Chandler, RSCJ, as she tracks religious life trends in America. A sociologist with a doctorate in Religion & Society, she is in a unique position to both reflect on and analyze information from many different sources about vowed religious life that comes to her as director of the Center of the Study of Religious Life (CSRL) in Chicago. Her ardent prayer is that the resources of CSRL will be a support to leaders of congregations of women and men in promoting the vitality and mission of religious life, and not just be fodder for some archives.

“I have a real passion for the future of religious life. How are we being called to live our charisms in the years to come? It isn’t sufficient to respond only to the needs of today. We must also make decisions for the future.” Sister Chandler said her intense interest in the future “is rooted in the fact that I think about this all day long.”

Creating a place for ongoing reflection

The Center began in the imagination of a group of men and women religious in Washington, D.C., who used to meet informally to discuss what studies of religious life seemed to mean for

contemporary religious life. They envisioned a center that could facilitate ongoing interdisciplinary reflection on religious in the U.S. They prepared a proposal, which they took to the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) and the Conference of Major Superiors of Men (CMSM), asking for support and sponsorship. LCWR and CMSM considered various theological schools looking for a base for the Center, and eventually selected the Catholic Theological Union (CTU) in Chicago. The three organizations: CTU, LCWR and CMSM jointly established the Center in 1998 and remain its sponsors today.

Initial funding for CSRL came from member congregations of LCWR and CMSM as well as foundations. In 2002, the joint board of CMSM and LCWR developed a plan for annual memberships to create a funding source for the Center. Today, about 300 congregations of women and men religious support the Center through annual membership contributions, Sister Chandler said.

The Center carries out its mission of conducting interdisciplinary and intercultural reflection on the life of Catholic religious sisters, brothers and priests in the United States, serving as a

resource to religious congregations and their leaders by:

- Providing tools for planning and reflection.
- Tracking religious life trends and research.
- Designing workshops for various leadership gatherings.
- Convening interdisciplinary reflection forums.
- Making information about Catholic vowed religious life accessible to religious organizations, writers and researchers.

Semi-annually the Center convenes its “scholars’ roundtable,” a group of six members from various fields—church historians, theologians, psychologists and sociologists (lay and religious)—to reflect on current issues and produce an essay for leaders of religious congregations. “It’s one way we do interdisciplinary reflection,” she said.

The Generational Cultures project is currently underway. Sister Patricia Wittberg, S.C., has created two presentations to help congregational leaders better understand why different generations have different cultures and what some of the younger cultures look like.

This is particularly important for welcoming younger members into communities with few members from Generation X or the Millennial generation. These resources will be posted on the CSRL website.

Keeping up with the conversations

“I keep my antenna up, to know what the conversations are out there like a bee going to different flowers,” she said. In this regard, she works almost like a news reporter.



Mary Charlotte Chandler, RSCJ, top row, second from the left, with members of her Board of Trustees.

“If I go to the religious brothers, I get the stories there. If I go to a young religious conference, I get the stories there. The conversations are out there,” she said.

Sister Chandler attends the annual assembly of the National Conference of Vicars for Religious each spring and the national assemblies of LCWR and CMSM each August eager to learn from the experience of these leaders.

As the Center’s director—and as part of its regular programming—Sister Chandler also is a frequent speaker at various national and regional gatherings of religious. Her signature topic is “The Future of Religious Life in Context.”

“Interesting and Challenging Times” for congregations

In a recent newsletter of the Center called “Kindling,” Sister Chandler listed fourteen points as a “few pieces of our current context” in an article entitled “Interesting and Challenging Times.”

- Many communities are in the midst of re-founding and/or reconfiguring.

continued



Sister Chandler works with assistant Maria Alamillo.



Design and marketing professionals of Seruto and Company work with the LCWR history exhibit committee.



An exhibit used by the Center of the Study of Religious Life that explains its focus and various offerings.

- Care of the elderly is a challenge for many communities.
- The overall number of religious in the country is declining.
- Numerous new communities are emerging, some hoping to be religious communities.
- Lay movements are growing.
- Some religious congregations are planning ‘grace-full’ endings.
- Religious, ordained and lay, are coming from other countries to minister here.
- There is an increasing awareness of other forms of consecrated life, e.g., consecrated secularity, consecrated virginity and consecrated laity.
- Newer members in many congregations are more ethnically diverse than the professed members.
- Various forms of non-vowed lay associations of religious congregations continue to grow.
- Men religious are completing extensive internal work to prevent sexual abuse from happening.
- Many younger members desire external signs of their commitment and belonging, such as habits.
- The Internet is providing new ways of communicating about religious life, e.g., blogs, a site to match inquirers with communities, downloadable files.
- Religious communities have entered into numerous collaborative ministerial and formation efforts.

“We are in the midst of a major transition,” Sister Chandler observed. “The history of religious life has much to teach us here.” In times of great social and cultural change two things happen within religious life, she said. The forms begin to change, adapting to the new context and internal renewal movements arise.

Some congregations conclude their mission, new congregations begin, and some congregations draw from the wealth of their charism and spirituality to respond to the new times. Change can be difficult but it is full of hope and possibility.

Life as director

Broadly educated with a doctorate in Religion & Society and masters’ degrees in computer science, sociology and theology, Sister Chandler is well-equipped for guiding the operations of the Center as well as its programs; “anything there is to do to run a small non-profit.” This includes such tasks as making fund raising calls and preparing the audit. It is a position that has given her an eye for watching a budget. “We bought hundreds of the ‘forever stamps,’” she said, laughing.

The Center is currently staffed by only two people: Sister Chandler and an administrative assistant, Ms. Maria Alamillo. The two work tirelessly to keep up with so many projects, but generally keep good cheer.

With this rather intense job and lifestyle (her hobby, she said, has become “doing maintenance work” for her community house) how does Sister Chandler have time for the contemplation so important in her life as a Religious of the Sacred Heart?

She smiled, “I do tend to over-commit. And that’s true for religious in general.” And then, after hours of rapid-fire interaction, comes a heartfelt testimony from a person who for a moment is but a soul in time.

“So every morning, from five forty-five until seven—I have my morning coffee with Jesus.” ✦

“Women & Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America” A legacy that parallels American history

Because Mary Charlotte Chandler, RSCJ, says she “tends to over-commit,” it is not surprising that you find her on the History Committee of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR). If that sounds like a bookish position, read further. This History Committee was created to plan a traveling exhibit showcasing the contributions of “Sisters” to the social and cultural fabric of the United States. The exhibit is expected to begin touring next spring.

The exhibit, called “Women & Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America,” has become a labor of love for Sister Chandler and others on the committee. The museum-quality exhibit will explore the pioneer spirit, vision and courage of sisters in establishing schools, hospitals, colleges and other social service agencies that have served millions since the first sisters arrived in the United States in 1727 to the present day. It will not shy away from the struggles and controversies that are a part of the story.

Among the authentically American artifacts fascinating Sister Chandler is a letter from President Thomas Jefferson dated May 15, 1804, to the Ursuline Sisters of New Orleans assuring their religious freedom after the transfer of power from France to the United States.

“There were battlefield nurses on both sides during the Civil War,” Sister Chandler said, citing an example of how women religious “were there” as participants in major events in U.S. history. In fact, a painting commissioned by President Lincoln and hung in the White House shows a Sister of Mercy reading to a wounded soldier.

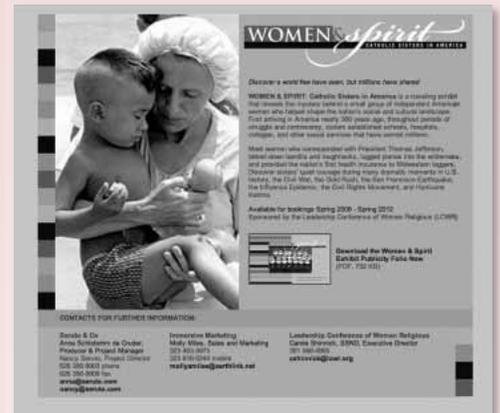
“The exhibit will be illustrative, not exhaustive” Helen Garvey, BVM, chair of the History Committee, regularly reminds the committee. It will tell the large story of the contributions of women religious, but not the wonderful stories of the all contributions made by hundreds of congregations and monasteries. Since the religious who have been canonized will be named, Philippine Duchesne will have her place in the exhibit.

With nearly 300 years of history documented by a wealth of artifacts, photos and stories held by religious congregations, it became clear very soon that the project was beyond the collective abilities of the planning committee. So the committee did not hesitate to call in the professionals.

“Women & Spirit” is being designed and produced by Seruto & Company of Pasadena, California, which also designed the “Tutankhamen and the Golden Age of the Pharaohs” exhibit several years ago, Sister Chandler said, adding that it has been fascinating working with a team of creative designers, artists, engineers and marketing specialists.

Seruto is designing the exhibit using a flexible modular system to facilitate its traveling to various venues over a three-year period. It is expected that the exhibit will be housed in history museums in major U.S. cities and will include educational outreach packages and a curriculum. Organizers at each venue will have the opportunity to augment the exhibit with artifacts and stories from the region.

The committee has established a website for the project, www.womenandspirit.org, initially



The project website, www.womenandspirit.org, keeps supporters of the exhibit up to date with news about developments.

designed for museums seeking information about the exhibit; it will be expanded to include information for the public, including the media.

The project is being funded almost entirely by donations, including a challenge grant, which to date have reached \$3.5 million. Sister Chandler said the committee will also work with local sponsors in cities welcoming “Women & Spirit.”

In a strong endorsement of this unprecedented exhibit, which appeared in a recent “Women & Spirit” newsletter, John Allen, senior Vatican analyst for CNN, wrote: “Like most Catholics, I’ve long been haunted by the sense that our sisters don’t get anything like the credit they deserve. Not that they’re in it for the credit, of course, but in an era of declining vocations, this is a story that must be told.... Against all odds, these largely anonymous, unsung women changed the country. Be dazzled by this exhibit—and if you’re Catholic—feel your heart swell with pride.” ❖

Anniversary set for *S*t. Philippine Duchesne

Ceremonies marked the twentieth anniversary of the canonization of Saint Rose Philippine Duchesne, who came from France to the new world as a missionary in 1818, with a Mass and other events on Thursday, July 3, in St. Charles, Missouri. It is the same date on which she was canonized in 1988.

Philippine Duchesne had been beatified by Pope Pius XII in 1940, a sacred honor that ensured forever the preservation of the memory of this pioneer religious, who endured the extreme hardships of the undeveloped and untamed American Midwest to make God's love visible to both native people and immigrants.

The step toward sainthood came nearly fifty years after the beatification, when a French-born Religious of the Sacred Heart working in Japan was cured of throat cancer after praying to Blessed Philippine for a full recovery. The Society of the Sacred Heart, in 1987, learned that this miracle would elevate its Blessed Philippine to sainthood. She was canonized by Pope John Paul II on July 3, 1988, at St. Peter's in Rome.

Philippine Duchesne is a patron of the Archdiocese of St. Louis and the only canonized saint buried in Missouri.

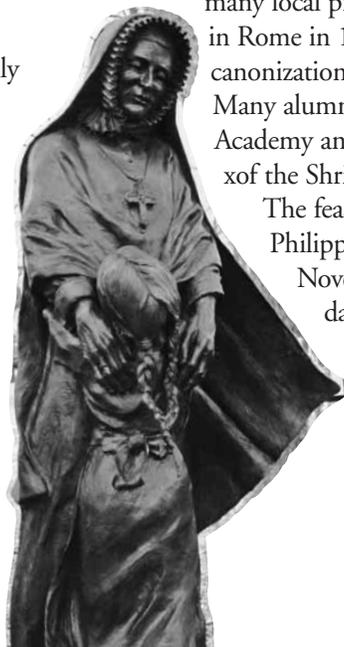
Jane Cannon, alumnae/i director of the Academy of the Sacred Heart in St. Charles, said the canonization anniversary celebration included a Mass at the Shrine of St. Philippine Duchesne on the campus of the Academy. It is the site of the first school that Mother Duchesne founded when she came to America.



St. Philippine Duchesne was canonized by Pope John Paul II in ceremonies on July 3, 1988, here at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome.

The Mass at the Academy was celebrated in the afternoon. There were docents available to give tours of the historic rooms at the Academy. Presiding at the Liturgy was Reverend Robert Jovanovic, one of the many local priests who were in Rome in 1988 for the canonization ceremonies. Many alumnae/i of the Academy and other friends of the Shrine attended.

The feast day of Saint Philippine Duchesne is November 18, the date on which she died in 1852 at St. Charles. ✦



Statue of St. Philippine Duchesne in St. Charles, Missouri.

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.

Janet Reberdy
May 12, 2008

Virginia Barsch
June 26, 2008

Anita von Wellsheim
June 30, 2008

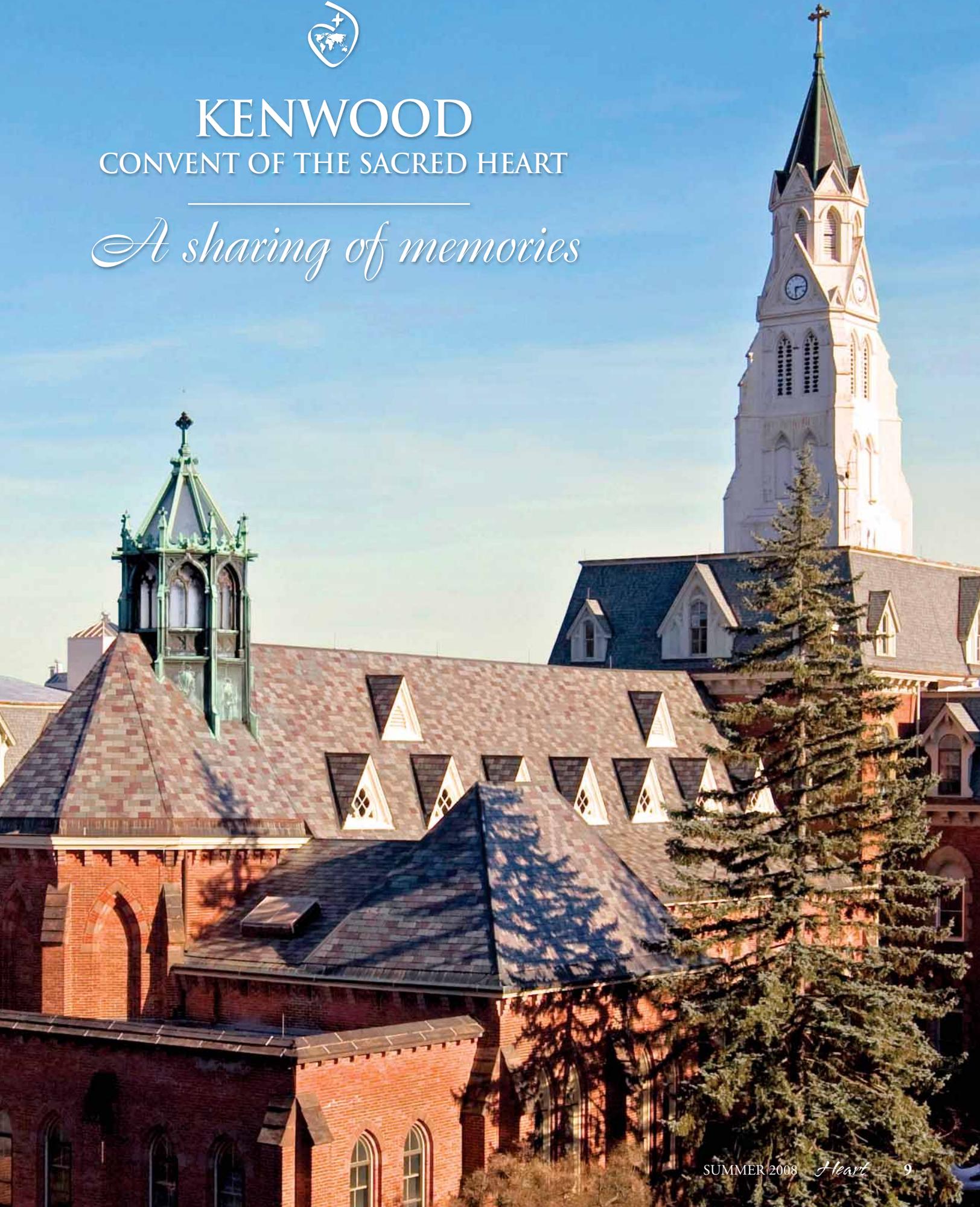
Teresa Kent
July 13, 2008



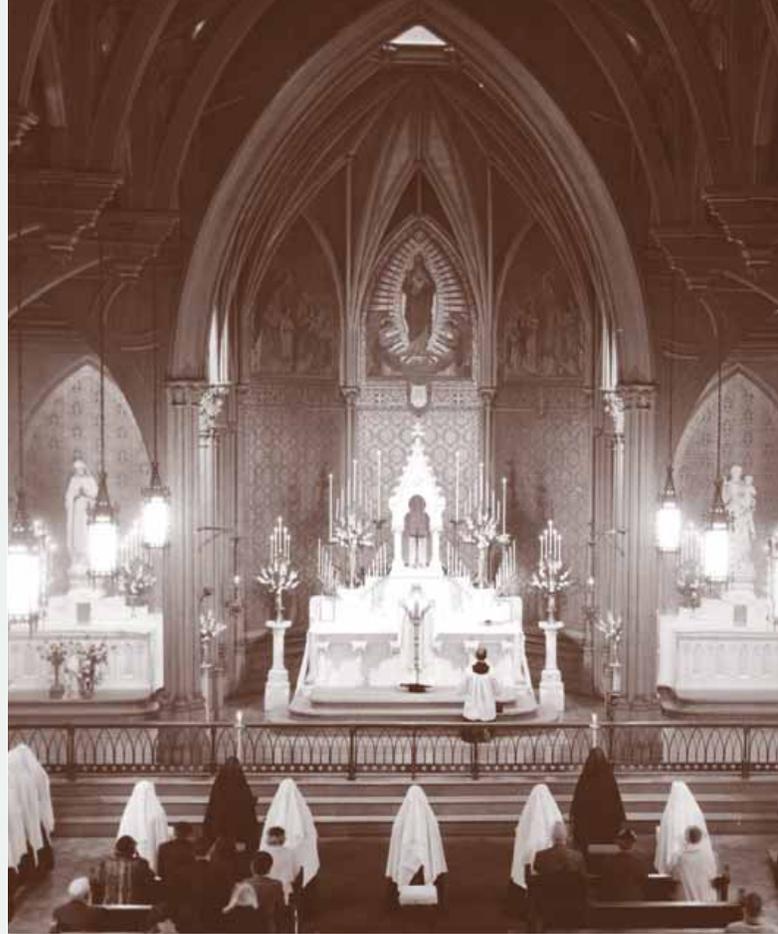
KENWOOD

CONVENT OF THE SACRED HEART

A sharing of memories



MEMORIES OF PEOPLE and deeds came flooding back as four Religious of the Sacred Heart gathered recently in a sitting room at Kenwood Convent of the Sacred Heart to discuss the pending passing of life as it has been known at the venerable place for a century and a half. The four—Jean Bautz, Marie Buonato, Margaret Mary “Meg” Canty and Patrice Donovan—were remembering notable events and people in the way that archivists might, as keepers of important history, not given to sentimentality. They spoke of the various superiors and mistresses general they had known, women remembered for the marks they put on life at Kenwood: Gertrude Bodkin, Ursula Benziger, Agnes Barry, Claire Krim, Anna Boyle. “Everybody remembers Krimmy!” Sister Donovan said wistfully, allowing a slight smile at some happy remembrance. And there were nods all around.



The Kenwood chapel where many women received the habit and made first vows to God in the Society.

THE FIRST 100 YEARS. A SOLID FOUNDATION IN THE NEW WORLD

One cannot separate the people from the place when considering the 150 years that the Religious of the Sacred Heart have lived on the holy ground just south of Albany known simply as Kenwood. The story of Kenwood Convent of the Sacred Heart is one story of the Society of the Sacred Heart in the Americas, where thousands of young women in discernment came through its strong oak doors and returned to the schools and later to other ministries in the world with a special gift, because their work was grounded in their charism: to make God’s love visible in the heart of the world.

God’s love has been visible at Kenwood for 150 years, through the loving work of the religious who came there to dedicate their lives to God and to the service of God’s people. They were answering a call first given shape in Amiens, in post-revolutionary France, at a time not too far removed from the beginnings of Kenwood. Saint Madeleine Sophie Barat had a vision, and the fervor with which her daughters followed that vision could not be contained in Amiens or even in France. Almost immediately, the Society of the Sacred Heart became firmly established in the New World and beyond.



Photo: Betty Shearman, RSCJ

Left to right: Jean Bautz, RSCJ, Marie Buonato, RSCJ, Margaret Mary Canty, RSCJ, share a smile remembering moments in Kenwood history.



Photo: Jerry Naunheim, Jr.

At left: Patrice Donovan, RSCJ, tells her favorite story.

The Society was still young when Madeleine Sophie directed that another “mission” be launched in the United States, where earlier and in more primitive circumstances Saint Philippine Duchesne had brought the Society to St. Charles, Missouri.

In response to this call for a new mission, an apostolate was begun in Albany, New York. It was 1852, and Mother Aloysia Hardey, returning from the Seventh General Congregation in Lyons, France, put a stake in the ground in Albany, after which Mother Barat rather famously wrote: “Keep me informed about everything... You know how I love this mission.”

Within a year, the Society had a house on North Pearl Street that was home for several nuns and—within another year—a school for thirty-six students. By 1855, space was running out, and a larger house was purchased. Four years later, needing even more space, the Society bought a house on fifty-three acres south of Albany. The property had been developed by Joel Rathbone, who had given it the name “Kenwood.”

The school, which had grown and prospered with each move, clearly “arrived” two years after the purchase of the Rathbone House. In 1861, it was incorporated as “Female Academy of the Sacred Heart” in the State of New York. The community stayed there for about seven years, encompassing the entire time of the Civil War. But in 1866, one year after the end of the war and the death of beloved founder Madeleine Sophie Barat, a five-year construction program on the site began, building the structure that still stands today. By 1868, the first novices moved into the “vast, bright study hall and spacious well-aired sleeping quarters,” according to *Life Through 125 Years*, a short history of Kenwood by Ruth Cunningham, RSCJ, published in 1978.

By the end of the 19th Century, life at Kenwood had fallen into a pattern that would remain for the next sixty or so years, when the country would undergo a broad, sometimes painful, social revolution, and the Church would experience the Second Vatican Council with its watershed effect on all things Catholic. But that was still in the distant future, removed by two world wars from the pastoral setting of Kenwood, as the 20th Century dawned. As it reached one hundred years, the Society of the Sacred Heart took stock of itself as a growing organization and marked two notable occasions.

In 1900 the centenary of the Society was celebrated in convents worldwide. The local newspaper in Albany covered the three days of festivities at Kenwood as a major event. Already the Society’s gift of collaboration with a wide circle of groups was evident, as more than 1,000 people were involved in the celebration, including a strong network of alumnae, current academy pupils and their families, sodalities and the children of a local orphanage.

continued

Rose Chen, RSCJ, left, on the day of her first vows with Mother Marie Louise Schroen, RSCJ, mistress of novices.



Below: Mother Gertrude Bodkin, RSCJ, mistress of novices and superior vicar who served for sixty years at Kenwood.



At the porte-cochère, Mother Margaret Mary Coakley, RSCJ, mistress of novices, welcomes new candidates to Kenwood. Ann Smith, RSCJ, is on her left.



Ma Mère Ducoin came to Kenwood from France and taught French to children and novices.



Teaching moment: Dorothy Franklin, RSCJ, reads to children.

St. Madeleine Sophie Barat loved the moments she had with children.



Photo: Jerry Naunheim, Jr.

The next event was all about Kenwood and occurred three years later on the fiftieth anniversary of the Society's beginning in Albany. By this time, there were many religious in other houses who had lived previously at Kenwood, and many of these returned to mark the anniversary. Soon afterward, in 1908, Madeleine Sophie was beatified. When she was canonized in 1925, it was a former student of the parish school at Kenwood who later became a Religious of the Sacred Heart, Sister Rose Coyne, whose cure was accepted for the canonization.

In 1909 Mother Gertrude Bodkin was sent to Kenwood to take charge of the novitiate, which, since the visit of the superior general, Mother Mabel Digby, in 1899, was the center of formation of all the choir novices of the United States and Canada. Mother Bodkin, who had been formed at Roehampton by Mother Janet Erskine Stuart, was beginning a ministry at Kenwood as mistress of novices and later as superior that would last for sixty years. Having a strong sense of the international Society's place in the world, she wrote, as recorded in Margaret Williams' biography, *Life of Mother Gertrude Bodkin*:

“Let us be as wide as the world. We have the interests of the Church all over the world in our hearts and that increases our desire. As our desires increase in fervor they spread themselves out all over God's creation, until not one person is excluded from our prayer.”

In May of 1914 Mother Stuart visited Kenwood at the end of her journey around the world as superior general. The student who welcomed her in the name of the school was Helen Fitzgerald, who would later replace Mother Bodkin as superior vicar of the Albany Kenwood Vicariate.

During this period, Mother Bodkin was presiding over a springtime of vocations coming into Kenwood at a significant rate. The necessity of teacher training for the novices required the establishment of a Normal Training School, which was accredited by the State of New York in 1927, and the increased numbers led to the construction of a new novitiate wing, opened in 1932. The number of novices steadily increased in the next decades, and the west wing occupancy reached its peak by 1960 at 100 novices and postulants.

As a worldwide organization by both its founding and its mission, the Society experienced 20th Century wars with the rest of humankind. During World War II, with Europe in the grip of the horrors of modern conflict, RSCJ remained stateside for probation and final profession ceremonies, which were held at Kenwood instead of at the motherhouse in Rome. But beyond this administrative effect of the war, RSCJ all over the world continued to minister and bring hope to a people—especially school children—full of fear and uncertainty about the fate of loved ones involved in two theaters of war and frightened by the war's horrific postscript: the dawn of the nuclear arms race.

THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL— A TIME OF GREAT TRANSITION

“I remember Gregorian chant at vespers one day, and guitars the next,” said Margaret Mary “Meg” Canty, RSCJ, recalling the rapid changes that were coming in the 1960s. It was 1969, and signs from the recently completed Second Vatican Council were everywhere.

Sister Canty recalled with humor another experience of that year. She had been out of the country for a time, and during that period, style shifts were occurring in the habits worn by sisters in the United States. Completing her return trip, she found herself in three different habits in three days!

But it was not the “stylistic” changes from the Second Vatican Council that affected the lives and ministries of the Religious of the Sacred Heart. One radical result, she said, was “the end of cloister.” Cloister was a discipline closely related to the contemplative focus of the Society. While the Society’s members were pledged to continue its spirit through commitment to prayer and contemplation, new opportunities and decisions about them were about to affect the apostolic aspect of their lives.

These opportunities presented themselves as RSCJ were able to see beyond their convent walls and respond in new ways. In Kenwood’s neighborhood, the South End of Albany, high-rise apartments on Green Street provided subsidized housing, and the city was looking for help in accompanying the apartment residents: providing a listening ear for the elderly, the sick and those who needed simply to talk out the anxiety of their jail-bound sons or relatives. In exchange for poverty level rent, six RSCJ moved into two apartments and provided those services.

Anne Montgomery, RSCJ, says, “We learned that we could live easily below the welfare level.” Maryellen Harmon, RSCJ, who worked with the Urban League and community organizers as well as on the Albany School Board, founded the Albany Street Academy. Father Howard Hubbard (now the Bishop of Albany) who was at St. John’s inner city parish and worked at Hope House, a rehabilitation center, encouraged the RSCJ to be part of the outreach apostolate.

There were home Masses celebrated in the little apartment each Thursday evening and the reality of “wholly contemplative and wholly apostolic” became more deeply present in the attitudes of these religious. In 1970, two RSCJ, Mary Genevieve Smyth and Elizabeth Hoye, began an intentional community, *Abba House of Prayer*, in the west wing at Kenwood. Eventually a property was purchased on Western Avenue, and a new community moved into the city. The prayer house welcomed hundreds of laity, priests and religious of the Catholic and Episcopal traditions.

Gertrude Cosenke, RSCJ, a native Albanian, began to visit the homebound in various parishes including the one in which she grew up—Our Lady Help of Christians. Helen

continued



As a young religious, Judy Brown, RSCJ, taught at Kenwood Academy and later returned, serving on the Board of the Doane Stuart School and the pastoral care team for the *Pax Christi* Community.



When it rained or snowed, RSCJ used the cloister walk for moments of silence and prayer.



Photos on this page: Jerry Naunheim, Jr.

Maribeth Tobin, RSCJ, native of Albany, made her First Communion at and graduated from Kenwood, served in various locales as teacher, mistress general, superior in the U.S. and assistant general in Rome.



Sisters (and sisters)
Faine McMullen, RSCJ,
and Grail McMullen,
RSCJ, now live
at Teresian House.



Top: The Eucharist is the center of the daily life of the religious and the extended community.

Below: Ruth Lynch Henahan, left, (alumna of Kenwood and cousin of Rose Marie) and Rose Marie Quilter, RSCJ, sing together at the Liturgy.



Photos on this page: Jerry Naunheim, Jr.

Sweeney, RSCJ, found that she had a talent for lab research and worked at the Veterans' Hospital in cytology. Maria Teresa Daza, RSCJ, working with Father Rich Broderick, helped to organize the first Spanish apostolate for the diocese. Contacts made through Father Hubbard and other South End leaders helped Kenwood Academy in its efforts at racial and economic integration of the student body. All this took place beginning in 1967.

On the Kenwood campus, Roberta Guzzetta, RSCJ, began the Kenwood Day Care and Child Development Center, which flourished there until 2002 when it relocated to Rensselaer. In 1975 Kenwood Academy broke new ground by merging with the St. Agnes Episcopal School to foster ecumenical relations and join in the inter-faith work being done in the city of Albany. Headmistress at Kenwood, Margaret Brown, RSCJ, worked with the headmaster of St. Agnes, Reverend William Small, to bring the Roman Catholic and Episcopalian communities together, an endeavor blessed by Roman Catholic Bishop Edwin Broderick and Bishop Wilbur Hogg, the Episcopal Bishop.

As all this activity was taking place in the school, the retirement community, *Pax Christi*, was being formed. The relationships with the students of Kenwood, the Doane Stuart School and the Day Care and Child Development Center gave life and energy to all who lived and prayed together on the campus. For the years from 1969 to the present, the *Pax Christi* community has been a community of prayer, inspired by the Society's Constitutions: "You are now entering the most contemplative years of your life"—and Kenwood has increasingly become "holy ground."

THE "DECEMBER YEARS"

For the world, the Church and the Society of the Sacred Heart, the late 1960s were marked by intense change, unpredictable turmoil and tremendous opportunities for growth in all areas of life. Mandated by Vatican II, the first revisions of the *Constitutions* were begun. The process would continue until 1982. It was in this environment of change, beginning in 1969, that many transformations occurred at Kenwood.

After 100 years of being rooted there, the noviceship moved out of Kenwood. Fewer vocations in recent years meant that the extensive space of Kenwood's west wing was no longer needed for novices. Instead, our young sisters relocated near Boston to take advantage of both theological studies and a more flexible setting for initial formation.

In the late 1960s several Convents of the Sacred Heart closed and, with them, the infirmaries they housed. At that point Kenwood became home for many RSCJ who came for assisted living and skilled care, as well as for RSCJ nurses and fully active support staff, who brought companionship and

joy to their elders. A summer institute, "Fullness of Life," helped to prepare religious in their second half-century of life for the new opportunities that accompany aging.

Gradually, lay women and men were invited to enrich the sisters' lives on all levels of the infirmary staff: as department heads, nurses and nursing assistants, some working at Kenwood for twenty-five years or more. Pastoral care and activities departments offering many services to residents have contributed to a remarkable pattern of longevity for the sisters who, on average, live into their nineties. The devoted staff and the priests of the Albany Diocese who have served as chaplains have made of Kenwood a beautifully hospitable community, continuing to welcome the Children of Mary, the Kenwood Braille Association, families, friends, retreatants, Associates and thousands of guests, particularly during the last forty years.

THE SUN SETS ON KENWOOD

In 2002, with eighty religious over eighty years of age at Kenwood, the U.S. Province undertook new actuarial studies, which indicated that it would be impossible for the province to continue providing its own health care. An eldercare task force tapped the wisdom of experts and consulted RSCJ across the province to design the best options for the continuing care of its sisters in a way that would be financially viable.

On March 17, 2005, after more than two years of intense dialogue, the decision was made to close the retirement and infirmary center at Kenwood. Although there was grief in the face of the loss of this holy ground, the religious there have welcomed the new life that comes from sacrifice.

In an amazing gift of that Divine Providence on which Saint Madeleine Sophie relied, her sisters have been welcomed at Teresian House, a resident-centered Catholic health care facility operated by the Carmelite Sisters of the Aged and Infirm, under the sponsorship of the Diocese of Albany. Sophie, who felt an attraction to Carmel, said: "The tree of Carmel must always be at home in the garden of the Sacred Heart."

The spirit of prayer, the celebration of life and the tender care that springs from reverence for elders are palpable at Teresian House. The RSCJ are able to live community life there in a way that includes many new friends of the Society. Although this "new ministry looks inward, caring for our own," there is among the religious a constant awareness of the needs of the world and an outward movement to new forms of ministry, new ways of living their charism, grounded in the same vision Saint Madeleine Sophie left to her daughters. They spend their days in prayer for others and in contemplation of the Heart of Jesus, aware of and alive to the Spirit at work in the world and witnessing that RSCJ are in ministry for life. ❖



Begun in 1971, *The Abba House of Prayer* on Western Avenue welcomed laity, priests and religious for prayer. Following its closing several years ago, it will serve as a community house for RSCJ in the Albany area.

Below: Sister Therese Cave, O. Carm. (left) a Carmelite sister at Teresian House, talks with Anne Sturges, RSCJ, (center) and Elizabeth Hunter, RSCJ, (right) who volunteer with residents there.

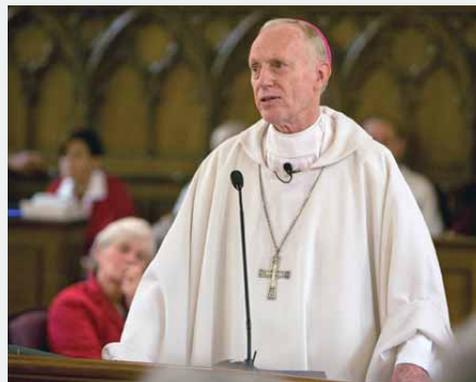
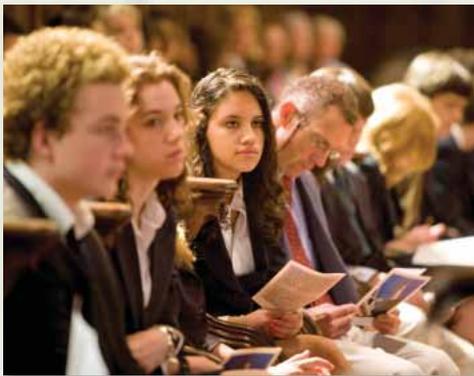


Photos: Jerry Naunheim, Jr.



WHAT FOLLOWS ARE HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE CLOSING EVENTS, MAY 29-31, 2008.

A CELEBRATION OF KENWOOD



Top left: Betty Shearman, RSCJ, carries the cross into the chapel. Middle left: Students from Doane Stuart School participate in a prayer service. Lower left: Barbara Bowe, RSCJ, Kenwood '63, shares her reflections.

Top right: Students from Newton Country Day School of the Sacred Heart, Boston add their voices to the ceremony. Middle right: Many RSCJ, alumnae, Associates and friends joined in the celebration. Lower right: Bishop Howard Hubbard celebrates the liturgy.

All photos on this page: Jerry Naunheim, Jr.

Princeton Academy of the Sacred Heart

Newest Network School Sees *Goals and Criteria* as a Deep Foundation

At the liturgy celebrating Saint Madeleine Sophie's Feast, Princeton Academy's ranks were swollen by guests representing the nine years of the school's young life, among them: Fran de la Chapelle, RSCJ, Stuart Country Day School headmistress; Jaye Hewitt Semrod, Stuart's board chair; Tom Byrne, former Princeton Academy board chair; Madeleine Ortman, executive director of the Network of Sacred Heart Schools; Kathleen Conan, RSCJ, provincial; and Paula Toner, RSCJ, former executive director of the Network and current provincial team member. They joined Princeton Academy board chair Robert Monsour and headmaster Olen Kalkus, and numerous parents, friends and the 235 boys who comprise the student body.

While Princeton Academy of the Sacred Heart in Princeton, New Jersey, is less than ten years old, headmaster Olen Kalkus sees its roots going back two centuries.

"What's exciting to me is that we've been able to adopt a groundwork that was laid 200 years ago," he said.

He was referring to the *Goals and Criteria for Sacred Heart Schools in the United States*, which indeed reflect the basic educational philosophy of the founding mothers of the Society of the Sacred Heart.

What also is exciting for Kalkus is that Princeton Academy was formally accepted, on April 26, 2008, as the newest member of the Network of Sacred Heart Schools, completing its three years as a "provisional member." This has been the goal of Princeton Academy since it was just an idea dreamt up by a group largely made up of parents of the all-girls Stuart Country Day School of the Sacred Heart in Princeton. They wanted a similar environment for their boys.

When their concept began to solidify, they advertised for a headmaster to build the school. Kalkus, living in Europe at the time as the upper school principal of the International School of Prague, saw a small ad for a founding headmaster for a new Sacred Heart school for boys in Princeton.

Kalkus was hired, and by fall of 1999 the school was opened on forty acres in Princeton that contained useable buildings that once served as the novitiate and convent of the Marianite Sisters of Holy Cross.



Olen Kalkus, enjoys his work with young students as the headmaster at Princeton Academy, newest network school.

It opened with thirty-two students in kindergarten through third grade with the goal of adding grades each year. In 2004 it was accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools. By the start of the 2007-2008 school year, it had grown to 235 students in junior-kindergarten through eighth grade.

The future is bright, Kalkus believes, and he expects the academy to reach its capacity of 300 students soon. He holds the *Goals and Criteria* up as the key to the school's success, giving students and faculty an instructive foundation that gives meaning to what they do.

For example, he said, Princeton Academy is engaged in many community service initiatives, grounded in the third Goal that calls for "social awareness that impels to action." "A lot of schools teach what is right and just. Here we teach the students to act on their beliefs and make a difference."

Sister Fran de la Chapelle, headmistress of Stuart Country Day School, said: "As I sat at the Liturgy, I was aware of being surrounded by young men ages five to fourteen. For me this was a different experience. I smiled to myself as I realized that we are truly brother and sister schools. When I asked the young men how many had sisters, mothers, grandmothers, or aunts who attended Stuart, a sea of arms was waving."

The opening hymn "We are Called" set the tone for this wonderful event. All sang together:

*Sing! Sing a new song!
Sing of that great day when all will be one!
God will reign and we'll walk with each other
As sisters and brothers united in love!*

The presentation of the plaque of membership to Kalkus was a truly celebratory moment. A dream of ten years ago has become a reality. ✦



A Life Led by the Spirit

She has had ministries in Rome and Seoul, but it all started on Grosse Ile, an island south of Detroit, Michigan, in 1956, when during a weekend retreat young Gail O'Donnell read Thomas Merton's *The Seven Storey Mountain*.

"I knew then that I wanted to give my life wholly to God," she said. A life dedicated to spirituality inspired by Thomas Merton had begun.

Much has happened since those days of growing up on Grosse Ile in a household of eight children and learning about the Society while boarding at the Academy of the Sacred Heart in Grosse Pointe, "because there was not a Catholic school on the island."

"I entered the novitiate at Kenwood Convent of the Sacred Heart in 1957 and made my vows in 1960," said Gail O'Donnell, RSCJ. Her own spirituality led her not only to education, which is the mission of a Religious of the Sacred Heart, but eventually to work in formation in a variety of settings both abroad and in the U.S. Province.

“In 1965 I received my master’s degree from Manhattanville. Cloister was just beginning to be lifted, and I asked for and received permission to teach in Harlem during that summer,” she said.

Following the normal track for a new RSCJ, she continued in teaching and administration in two Sacred Heart schools that closed: Grosse Pointe, Michigan, her alma mater, and Nottingham Academy, a Sacred Heart School in Buffalo, New York.

God was now calling in a new direction, and her skills honed in the classroom would now be pointed toward a new ministry as she began studies at Weston Jesuit School of Theology in Cambridge, Massachusetts. These beginnings would take her into the work of religious formation.

Seeking more training in theology and spirituality, Sister O’Donnell studied for three years at Weston, starting in 1977, earning a master’s degree in divinity. She still cherishes those days in Cambridge.

“I loved this time to deepen my knowledge of and relationship with God,” she said.

After Weston, she went, in 1980, to Korea to teach theology and English at Song Sim College—the Sacred Heart college outside of Seoul. “My time in Korea was precious. I widened my horizons and learned valuable lessons about the importance of language and culture,” she said.

It was not an easy life there. “Korea was a very poor country at that time and life was restrictive under military dictators. There were also hardships stemming from unfamiliarity with the culture,” she said.

During this period, she also traveled to Taiwan, Japan and the Philippines teaching theology and conducting workshops.

Work in formation begins in St. Louis

The years at Weston and in the Pacific Rim countries seemed to prepare Sister O’Donnell for her next ministry: formation of religious candidates.

“When I returned [from Asia] the five provinces of the U.S. were becoming one province—and I was appointed to the position in which I was responsible for the formation of our candidates and young professed as well as for ongoing formation for the province,” Sister O’Donnell said.



Photo: David Kamerman

Weston Jesuit School of Theology will be re-affiliated with Boston College in September, 2008.

Based in the middle of the country in St. Louis, she began “earning many frequent flyer miles visiting those in formation who were in communities and ministries all around this vast country,” she said.

During that period, from 1982 to 1988, she had thirty-six young religious under her care and guidance.

Her formation work took a new and interesting turn when the Jesuits of the Detroit-Chicago Province “decided to have a woman on their novitiate team—a revolutionary decision—but they wanted their novices to interact with a woman from the beginning of their training.” She was chosen for this position.

She enjoyed this work immensely, and it was an added benefit to be based near her home town in Detroit.

It was during this time that she was asked to be part of the Society’s international formation team in Rome.

“The team was responsible for the ‘probation’—the period of intense study of our Constitutions—and a thirty-day retreat for our young religious from all around the world, in preparation for their final vows,” she said.

The Rome experience, Sister O’Donnell said, “was for me also a rich immersion in the Society’s spirituality and inter-culturality. Returning in 2000 from Rome, her formation work led Sister O’Donnell to find herself again in Cambridge among young Jesuits—and Franciscans—who were preparing for ordination at Weston Jesuit School of Theology.

She said that at Weston she was impressed with “a growing number of young men and women desiring to serve as lay ministers in the church.”

continued



Photo: Jerry Naunheim, Jr.

Gail O'Donnell, RSCJ

“This burst of energy for lay ministry is tangible evidence to me of the Holy Spirit working in our age—and I am blessed to be a small part of it.”

Sister O'Donnell heads Weston's sabbatical program as director of continuing education, a position she has held for several years. The program provides rest and renewal to religious and priests from around the world who have been serving in ministry for a number of years.

Here, “they are able to unpack their rich ministerial lives at a weekly colloquium, audit courses from Weston's superb faculty, live in a congenial community setting and take advantage of the myriad cultural riches that Boston has to offer.”

Weston will be re-affiliated with Boston College in September, 2008, and the sabbatical program will move from Cambridge to the Chestnut Hill Campus.

Helping “God-Seeking Women” on their spiritual journeys

Concurrent with her work at Weston, since 2002 Sister O'Donnell has once again engaged in formation as director of young professed for the Society in the United States.

“It has been a privilege to accompany these mature, competent, God-seeking women on their way to final profession. In the Society, currently

there are eight young professed ministering in Boston, Albany, New York, San Diego and New Rochelle (New York), and one is currently teaching in our elementary school in Uganda on her way to profession in Rome,” she said.

Working in the formation of RSCJ—professed of temporary vows—she added, or with Jesuit novices in their initial stages and/or the renewal of clergy and religious on sabbatical at Weston, “I have had the privilege to have my ministries directly express my passion, the reason that I entered the Society, to discover and make known the love of God.”

She shares this passion in the classroom and out of it, “doing spiritual direction or giving retreats.”

She continues to be impressed “with the number of lay people who seek spiritual direction, young people who are searching for meaning, who are very serious about their life with God and want support.”

These lay men and women at Weston who are preparing to dedicate their lives to ministry in the church “at this moment outnumber the Jesuits,” she said. “This burst of energy for lay ministry is tangible evidence to me of the Holy Spirit working in our age—and I am blessed to be a small part of it.”

And from her depth of experience working with religious in this key part of their spiritual journey, Sister O'Donnell is very impressed with the kind of person seeking to enter the Society today.

“The women who come to us today—in contrast to my experience in the 1980s—are older when they enter, bring a wealth of talents and experience and have a vision of religious life in which prayer and community are priorities. Many of them have already had years of ministry before they enter,” she said.

For an experienced RSCJ like Sister O'Donnell, the image of women entering religious life in today's society with its high level of noise, which often obscures the voice of God, is a sure sign of God's blessing and warms the heart.

“They give me great hope for our province and the Society,” she said. ❖

Holy Hospitality

The Grace of Listening and the Gift of Story

By Ellen Collesano, RSCJ

“Listening is the oldest and perhaps the most powerful tool of healing... • When we listen, we offer with our attention an opportunity for wholeness. Our listening creates sanctuary for the homeless parts within the other person. That which has been denied, unloved, devalued by themselves and by others. That which is hidden. • In this culture the soul and the heart too often go homeless. • Listening creates a holy silence. • When you listen generously to people, they can hear truth in themselves, often for the first time. • And in the silence of listening, you can know yourself in everyone. Eventually you may be able to hear, in everyone and beyond everyone, the unseen singing softly to itself and to you.”

Kitchen Table Wisdom: Stories that Heal
by Rachel Naomi Remen, MD, p. 219-220

For the past two and a half years I have had the grace and blessing to be engaged in a ministry of hospitality and listening in the form of my ministry at Camillus House, a non-profit organization in Miami, Florida, founded in 1960 by the Brothers of the Good Shepherd, which provides assistance to poor and homeless men, women and children. Camillus House offers a full range of services that includes food, shelter, housing, rehabilitative treatment and health care. “Each service is carried out with the deeply held belief that every human being deserves love, respect and an opportunity to live a dignified life.” (www.camillus.org)

I have been working as the intake coordinator and as a counselor in our dual diagnosis (addiction and mental health) rehabilitation program. This work gives me the privileged role of welcoming chronically homeless men into our treatment program. My main role has been to provide a safe and welcoming atmosphere so that men who are homeless and suffer from addiction or mental health problems can tell their story and together we can assess what might help them on the road to health, housing and economic stability.

In the course of my work, I have heard stories of the disintegration of families either by death or estrangement, the limitations that
continued



a post-incarcerated male faces upon leaving prison, the consequences of abuse and neglect and the results of drug abuse and homelessness. I have learned to welcome without judgment, to listen for themes that indicate areas of strength, and to assist each person to make choices for life. I have learned to recognize that we all are on a journey to wholeness, and very little separates us from one another when it comes to the human story.

Truly, I have learned more from the homeless men and the staff at Camillus House than I could ever hope to give. It has been a living study for me in the appreciation of differences, an affirmation of the resilience of the human person, and a firsthand view of how someone who has faced a whole range of truly challenging experiences can acknowledge the truth of his personal story and then lean on the strength of others and to find his own inner strength and life force.

Now, I have been asked to leave this work at Camillus House in order to do ministry of a different sort: to welcome women into the Society of the Sacred Heart as our director of vocation ministry. Aside from the obvious parallels of “intake” and “welcome,” there are deeper lessons that I have learned from my work with persons who are homeless, lessons that I can apply to vocation ministry. Those lessons make me better able to welcome other persons as they are, to provide a safe space for truth telling and life exploration, and then to ask the question: “Where can you find your inner strength, develop your spiritual self, become more and more integrated as a person; and where, relying on the fidelity of God and the love of others, can you best choose life and give your life for others?”

From my work in our treatment program at Camillus House, I have learned more about the steps in AA/NA, and this too will help me in my new ministry: that it is important first of all to accept where you are; second, let God walk with and alongside you, tell your truth, “work your program” and finally, give back. Our life as religious, as Christians, and indeed as members of the human family, is not for ourselves alone. This life is lived in order to give life and love to others. The love of the heart of God demands this of us.

Shortly before I left Camillus House, a friend gave me a poem of Rumi, a thirteenth century Persian poet; it describes in words more eloquent than mine the gift of welcoming the guest, be it the guest in our own life or in the person of “the stranger,” who comes into your life and becomes your angel, bestowing the unconditional grace of God upon your heart. I offer it as a tribute to those at Camillus House who have been my teachers and “guides from beyond.” ❖

The Guest House: (by Rumi)

This being human is a guest house.

Every morning a new arrival.

*A joy; a depression, a meanness,
some momentary awareness comes
as an unexpected visitor.*

Welcome and entertain them all!

*Even if they're a crowd of sorrows
who violently sweep your house
empty of its furniture,*

still, treat each guest honorably;

*He may be clearing you out
for some new delight.*

*The dark thought, the shame, the malice,
meet them at the door laughing,
and invite them in.*

*Be grateful for whoever comes,
because each has been sent
as a guide from beyond.*

Mevlana Jalal al-Din Rumi (1207-1273)
Persian Sufi poet, teacher and theologian



Ellen Collesano, RSCJ, holds masters' degrees in religious studies and clinical social work. After her work at Camillus House in Miami, Florida, and following her participation this summer in the General Chapter of the Society of the Sacred Heart in Lima, Peru, she will begin a new position as director of vocation ministry for the Society of the Sacred Heart, U.S. Province.

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- ♥ Become a member. For information, contact Ellen Collesano, RSCJ, vocation@rscj.org
- ♥ Become an associate. Contact Anne Byrne, RSCJ, at abyrne@rscj.org
- ♥ Support our mission financially. Please contact Shirley Miller, RSCJ, smiller@rscj.org.

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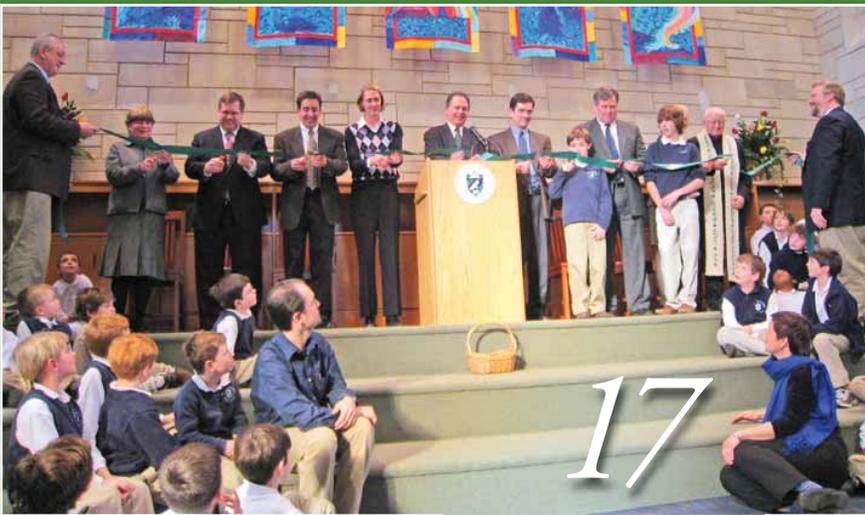
Photo: Jerry Naunheim, Jr.

A sharing of memories: Flanked by an arched entryway in the convent chapel, Joan Gannon, RSCJ, leads the procession at Kenwood's celebration May 31, 2008.



Photo: Jerry Naunheim, Jr.

A ministry in helping others: a group of RSCJ, (left to right) Kathleen McGrath, Diana Wall, Barbara Quinn, Annet Nankusu, Elisabeth Brinkmann, Gail O'Donnell, Lisa Buscher, Kim King, and Mamen Díaz Ruiz.



Newest network school: Princeton Academy of the Sacred Heart's headmaster, Olen Kalkus, (at podium) is joined by trustees, faculty members and students at the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the William E. Simon Chapel Library.

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