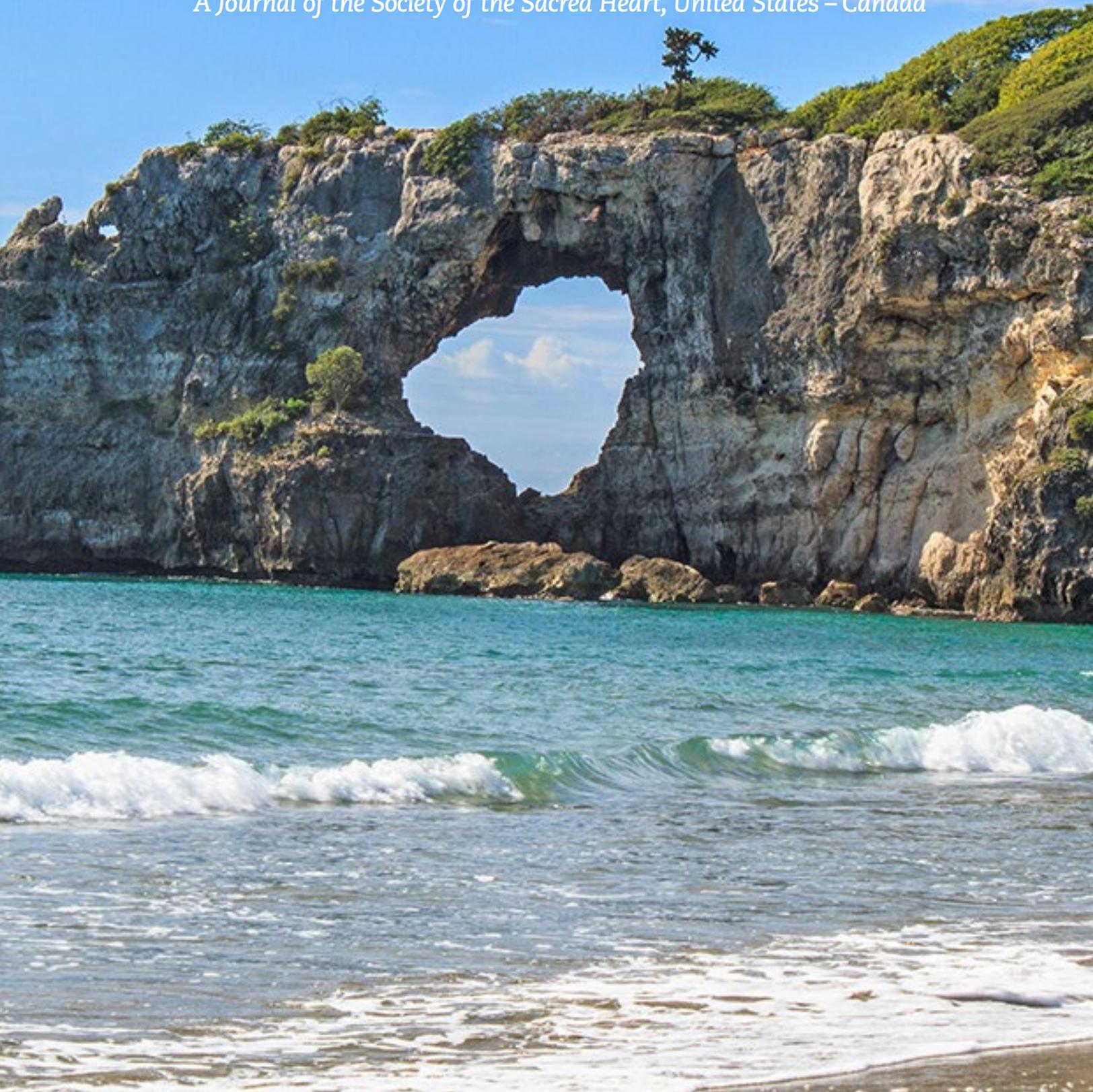


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Heart



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



...to Heart

Dear Friends and Family of the Sacred Heart,

¡Hola! Saint Madeleine Sophie Barat gave us many gifts; among the most important is the gift of our internationality. Our internationality gives us a ready-made way to “think globally and act locally.” I have experienced this gift in my own life over the past year as I spent time with our Spanish-speaking sisters during a language immersion program in Mexico and at meetings of the newly formed Philippine Duchesne Region, which encompasses nine provinces from South, Central and North America. The call to learn Spanish is a challenge I have lovingly embraced!

Our United States – Canada Province is one of 28 provinces that make up the global Society of the Sacred Heart. Religious of the Sacred Heart consider themselves members of one international community, and this unity is important. The words *cor unum et anima una in Corde Jesu* (one heart and one soul in the Heart of Jesus) appear on each of our profession crosses. “To be and to act as one Body” is one of the *Calls* from our General Chapter 2016.

Our internationality began in 1818, just 18 years after the founding of the Society of the Sacred Heart. Eugénie Audé, Octavie Berthold, Rose Philippine Duchesne, Catharine Lamarre, and Marguerite Manteau journeyed from France to the frontier land of Missouri. The early Religious of the Sacred Heart did not let political boundaries stand in their way, and today’s RSCJ won’t either. Internationality, so much a part of the Society of the Sacred Heart throughout its history, may prove to be one of the defining characteristics of its future.

This issue of *Heart* magazine is the first of several issues focusing on the relationship between the United States – Canada Province and the larger international Society of the Sacred Heart.

One of the highlights of this issue is an article about the meeting of the Philippine Duchesne Region – written in both Spanish and English. The 35 Religious of the Sacred Heart who gathered in Havana, Cuba, last December represented the provincial teams of the region, along with four members of the congregation’s Central Team from Rome. The gathering was unprecedented and is the foundation on which our new identity as a multi-lingual, multicultural region will be built.



Sheila Hammond, RSCJ, provincial, (center) and Marie-Jeanne Elonga, RSCJ, from the Central Team, at the Academy of the Sacred Heart in St. Charles, Missouri.

Other highlights include:

- an address given by Cecile Meijer, RSCJ, at our 2018 Frontiers Conference, “Contemporary new frontiers in internationality” (page 4)
- an article about how students at Carrollton School of the Sacred Heart in Miami, Florida, will participate at our International Sacred Heart Leaders Conference this April in Miami (page 9)
- first-hand descriptions of the life of the Society in Africa, written by Muriel Cameron, RSCJ, and Nancy Koke, RSCJ (page 18).

We also invite you to enjoy the photographs of the visit to our province by our congregational leaders from Rome (pages 16-17).

During these past months, we’ve heard on the news about climate change and ecological disasters in Australia (fires), Indonesia (flooding) and Puerto Rico (earthquakes), all places where RSCJ live and serve and where we have schools. Our beautiful cover image of a heart in nature is a reminder to cherish what we have today because tomorrow can be uncertain. This iconic cliff in Puerto Rico is gone, the result of powerful earthquakes – the result of powerful changes happening with our earth.

So as our earth and our Society encounter changes and challenges, we embrace our connectedness, believing it will continue to transform our hearts, our province and our congregation.

Con cariño y gratitud,

Sheila Hammond, RSCJ
Provincial
United States – Canada Province



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

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

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- 4 **Contemporary new frontiers in internationality**
By Cecile Meijer, RSCJ
- 9 **Students preparing to facilitate dialogue**
at International Heads Conference
By Suzanne Cooke, RSCJ
- 10 **Building a future together as one region**
Meeting of the Philippine Region in Cuba
By Diane Roche, RSCJ
- 10 **Construyendo juntas un futuro como región:**
Encuentro de la Región Filipina en Cuba
Por Diane Roche, RSCJ
Traducción en español por Lolín Menéndez RSCJ
- 16 **Central Team visits the United States – Canada Province**
- 18 **A dream becomes a pearl**
By Muriel Cameron, RSCJ
- 20 **Teaching seminarians in Uganda**
By Nancy Koke, RSCJ
- 22 **Tune in to our new podcast!**
By Erin Everson

Before January 6, 2020



After the earthquake January 6, 2020



ON THE COVER: Punta Ventana, which translates to "Window Point," a cherished natural wonder in Puerto Rico, collapsed January 6, 2020, after a 5.8 magnitude earthquake shook the island. The rock formation was one of the island's most iconic treasures and a major tourist attraction.

Please pray for the people of Puerto Rico, all those at our Sacred Heart schools and the RSCJ who live there as they recover from devastating earthquakes.

Contemporary new frontiers in internationality

By Cecile Meijer, RSCJ

As an immigrant to the United States, I have always felt a special bond with Saint Rose Philippine Duchesne. Throughout the years, Philippine has been the one sister who always “knew” from the inside what it meant to move from one country to another, from one culture to another. So when I was invited to be one of the speakers to address internationality at the Frontiers Conference in July 2018, my heart leapt.

The following article is a shortened version of my presentation at that conference. It explores what new frontiers of internationality we, as Sacred Heart family, might pursue today, both individually and collectively. With the Society’s historical commitment to internationality as the foundation, this reflection looks at three emerging frontiers that might stretch us in new directions:

- 1) internationality “on the move”
- 2) internationality as advocacy
- 3) internationality as deeper interculturalism or interculturality.

For the Society of the Sacred Heart, internationality is one of our most treasured gifts.

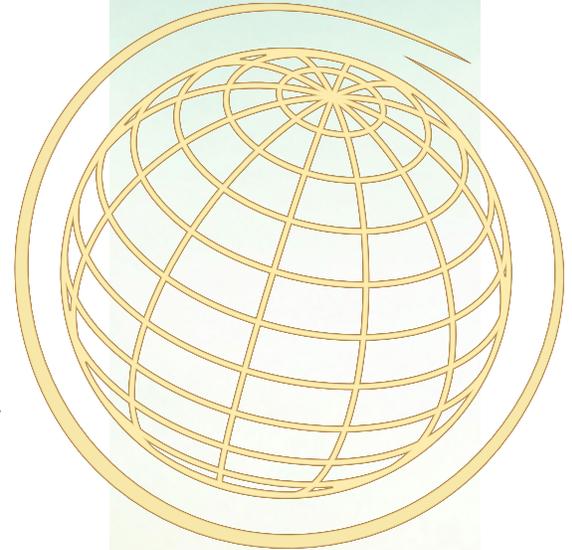
In Philippine’s time, the world was getting ever bigger, vaster, as people of all sorts, rich and poor, ventured out to settle in newly discovered, or rather conquered, lands. Communications and transportation went by covered wagon and boats, stretching over weeks and months.

In contrast, today’s world is getting smaller, thanks to the information revolution and many ongoing technological advances, such as artificial intelligence.

Today’s Global Village, once the scene of exploration and adventure into unknown territories, has become like a sandbox for anyone with access to the internet on a smart phone. We literally hold the world in our hands, at least that is what many think; and that in an era where change is constant and fast, seemingly never ending.

Navigating our “new normals” of living with terrorism and data breaches, nationalism and rising defense budgets, has led to widespread feelings of vulnerability and insecurity. Our incarnational spirituality has been entrusted to us for the transformation of the world. It asks us to be open to the spirit and willing to risk. We must both be knowledgeable about the world and translate that knowledge into action for the sake of the common good and our common home.

Giving hands and feet, voice and heart to our relationships makes everyone more human, affirms and reaffirms our common humanity. As the Spirit propelled Philippine’s desire to set sail to the New World, so the signs of our times beckon us to the next frontiers.



We must both be knowledgeable about the world and translate that knowledge into action for the sake of the common good and our common home.

Our heritage

Saint Madeleine Sophie Barat had a remarkable capacity to read the signs of her times. Growing up in the small town of Joigny during the French Revolution in the late 1700s, she became aware that the world was full of unrealized goodness, which she wanted to unleash by educating girls. Driven by a real need in the world, instead of becoming a contemplative Carmelite sister, Sophie established the Society of the Sacred Heart, a congregation of women contemplatives in action whose educational mission is still very relevant today.

Sophie envisioned a multitude of “adorers” from all over the world who would know the love of God. It was her desire that each student would experience God’s personal love for her (today we would speak of “her and him”) so that the student, in turn, could live out that love to renew and transform her social context.

For Sophie, internationality was a given. During her lifetime in the early to mid-19th century, the Society had foundations on four continents. By 1865, the Society counted more than 3,500 members. Today, RSCJ serve in 41 countries.

Usually internationality means an organization or group has branches or members in several countries. The Society’s General Chapter documents since 1988, however, show that over the years, the Society has increasingly articulated a much deeper and wider understanding of internationality, one in which our relationships take on global dimensions and are placed within the context of one common human family.

Today, our internationality is firmly rooted in the awareness that all life on earth, including the human family, is relational and interconnected, that all of creation is interdependent, and that, hence, my wellbeing depends on your wellbeing and vice versa. Wholeness of creation is both a process and our goal.

Did Philippine intuit this wisdom when she left France?

Internationality ‘on the move’

When Philippine Duchesne and her companions disembarked the *Rebecca* in New Orleans in 1818, they literally planted their feet on an unknown continent – a pretty radical and courageous thing to do for a midlife woman like Philippine, who was unaccustomed to the hardships of frontier life.

Where do we hear a call as we move toward the end of the first quarter of the 21st century? What does our call to radicality and risk imply?

The first frontier that comes to mind is as simple as it is radical: *offer – move – serve where the need is.*

As our demographics keep shifting, the places of new vocations do, as well. Why not offer ourselves as “*disponible*” sisters or lay volunteers who are ready, willing and able to help ensure the Society’s charism and mission can flourish in a new or struggling RSCJ context? Many of our fore-mothers have done so when they planted their feet on foreign soil.

An often forgotten side effect of living in another country is that living abroad opens us up to looking at our own country and culture through an uncommon lens. This new lens is not the same as looking at our home environment from another political vantage point, but arises from a unique and distinctive cultural angle and worldview. This new worldview leads to a deeper and wider experiential understanding of the interdependence and interrelatedness of peoples around the globe and, hence, of our common humanity.

For example, I came years ago as a Dutch woman and became a European by living in the U.S. Not only is such a grasp necessary for any global citizen, it also bonds people together and is part of the 2016 *Chapter Call* “to be more human” and “to be and to act as one Body.”



Presenters Cecile Meijer, RSCJ, (right) and Josephine Adibo, RSCJ, at the Frontiers Conference in 2018, a signature event of the 2018 Bicentennial celebrations.

Dialogue and encounter are two mantras Pope Francis calls each one of us to personify and humanize.

of society in building 'a culture which privileges dialogue as a form of encounter' and in creating 'a means for building consensus and agreement while seeking the goal of a just, responsive and inclusive society.'"

Of course, not everyone is called to physically move to new foreign destinations, so those staying home will need to find other ways of moving deeper into the human experience of the exploited and uprooted. Watching videos about refugees and migrants could be one way to do this, or reading and discussing books or articles on the plight of the displaced. Others might be attracted to offer more hands-on relief, such as at our southern border or at the local food bank or in (legal) immigration services.

We need to become creative in looking for innovative ways to support the footsteps of our contemporary Philippines, RSCJ or not.

One key dimension of internationality I encountered while serving as the Society's nongovernmental organization (NGO) representative at the United Nations is respectful dialogue. How does one get 193 member states with very different, often opposing, political agendas and ideologies to agree on anything, for example, the sustainable development goals (SDGs)?

The answer, I have learned, lies in the quality of our human relationships. Yes, governments will differ in their priorities and approaches, but it often is the manner of their interactions during deliberations and negotiations that allows for mutual understanding and appreciation of the "other" to develop, bridges to be built and friendships to be formed.

We all know that relational servant leadership goes much further than authoritative dictatorship. Pope Francis tells us the secret of "how" when he accepted the Charlemagne Prize in 2016:

"If there is one word that we should never tire of repeating, it is this: dialogue. We are called to promote a culture of dialogue by every possible means and thus to rebuild the fabric of society. The culture of dialogue entails a true apprenticeship and a discipline that enables us to view others as valid dialogue partners, to respect the foreigner, the immigrant and people from different cultures as worthy of being listened to. Today we urgently need to engage all the members

Dialogue and encounter are two mantras Pope Francis calls each one of us to personify and humanize. Repeatedly, he speaks of a culture of encounter, encountering the Risen Christ in everyday life. This call becomes even more sacred when one remembers Karl Rahner's words: "The Christian of the future will be a mystic or nothing at all."

The desire to let our lives be shaped by dialogue, encounter and prayer implies a powerful invitation to any contemplative in action, because our loving Creator is awe-inspiring: both transcendent (God beyond our imagining who is too big for our minds and hearts) and immanent (God living within each one of us, mysteriously incarnate in us).

The mystic knows that everyone and every living creature breathes God's Breath of Life, that this Love is the heartbeat of creation and has been its sustaining energy throughout our human and cosmic history.

Evocative of Matthew 25, this means that by serving, welcoming and caring for – in short, loving – our neighbor, we serve, welcome, care for and love God who lives in our neighbor.

A deep awareness of the indwelling presence of love, compassion, forgiveness and communion in all our relationships puts mission in a new perspective, because such consciousness results in a constant dialogue and encounter with Christ throughout the day: wholly contemplative and wholly apostolic.

Internationality as advocacy

Advocacy is the second aspect of internationality that calls us to cross new frontiers. Advocacy takes place at every level of life, from the most local setting (our neighborhoods or cities) to the international stage, for example, the European Union or United Nations (U.N.). Local advocates speak up and speak out for the needs of the people. As close witnesses of injustices suffered by their closest neighbors, contemplatives allow their prayer to be transformed into action.

The challenge for us today, as an international congregation, is to gain a deeper appreciation of how social ills are connected across borders. Dire poverty and the negative effects of climate change for people living in extreme poverty often lead to migration – poverty is multi-dimensional, advocates explain. Our world is such a web of life that "cause and effect" are literally half a world away, thus crying out for new multitudes of adorers who *want* to understand the systemic root causes and interconnections.



The delegates who represented the Society of the Sacred Heart at the 2019 United Nations High Level Political Forum, July 9-16, 2019, were (from left): Betty Nakato (Uganda), Lisabeth Kelly (intern, United States), Daphne Sequeira (general councillor, Rome), Rita Pinto (India), Sheila Smith (Canada and our UN-NGO representative), Bang Junghye (Korea) and Kim Jihye (Korea). "Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality" was the theme of the forum.

Many of our educational institutions have wonderful global citizenship education programs that teach such connecting-of-the-dots. Similarly, our presence at the U.N. is a critical vehicle to engage in international advocacy.

Once we understand that local injustices are reflections of a gravely unjust global system of imbalance, inequality and greed, we can begin to contribute at the international policy table from our life and mission as RSCJ to the benefit of the world, the common good. Systemic ills require systemic change. The world is one. The Society of the Sacred Heart is one. Now we must start to communicate that we also act as one.

One further frontier holds out great possibilities for international advocacy at the U.N. Have you ever realized that through the Society's NGO presence, we now can enter into dialogue with governments of countries where we are not physically present? By being at the U.N., we have multiplied our potential impact in ways that were unimaginable to both Sophie and Philippine.

Internationality as interculturality

A third frontier of internationality is for me interculturality, also known as interculturalism. Interculturality has been the Society's agenda since we left our cloisters and began inserting ourselves in small, local communities.

International experience for RSCJ probanists prior to taking final vows, sisters studying abroad, international novitiates in Chile and Chicago are examples of how RSCJ, to varying degrees, are part of today's intercultural flow shaping our Global Village.

For others, an intercultural student body in schools, exchange programs and a summer service program abroad, might illustrate that multiculturalism and interculturalism are a social fact of life today *and* are highly educative.

To name just a few of the challenges:

- Are we sufficiently aware that intercultural living demands much of our time and energy? That dialogue and encounter are essential parts of its success but require daily commitment and effort?
- How do we deal with differing values, norms and worldviews that underpin our communications and decision-making processes in an intercultural setting?
- How attentively will we listen to the relative or sister who returns from spending significant time abroad? Are we ready, willing and able to let her/his "changed self" influence our life? How do we journey with our returning missionaries?
- Do we expect foreign-born members in our neighborhoods, families or communities to adapt to us because we are the norm? Or are we open to their contribution, which will transform all of us?

As women religious, we increasingly live in intercultural communities – think, for example, of the motherhouse in Rome and the retreat center in Joigny. Might the recent *Chapter Calls* invite us all to discover and manifest how to live interculturality?

My recent experience of living in the “Beguinage” in Brussels, Belgium, might be illustrative.

As the unofficial capital of Europe, Brussels is a surprisingly diverse city. It is home to nationals from all European Union member states because many European and other international institutions are located in Brussels. There are also many migrants and refugees who have settled or been resettled in Belgium from francophone Africa or from the Middle East. Brussels is also home to a large Muslim population coming originally from North African countries, who came one or more generations ago.

The Beguinage where I lived is located in the European quarter of town. It is a complex of small townhouses and apartments modeled after the closed courtyards in the Middle Ages where pious widows and single women lived together a lay spirituality of prayer, a sort of private religious life without vows, each in her own little house. Built in 2017, our Beguinage is meant to provide rental housing for Christian families and single persons from around the world who are committed to living a Christ-centered life through solidarity, prayer and the building of community across cultures.

The Beguinage is international, intercultural, intercontinental, intergenerational and multilingual. Residents come from all over the world. As a deliberate religious presence in the Beguinage, the RSCJ community is one of the 20 households that make up the Beguinage. Our community was intercultural as well, constituted by two Belgians, one French and myself.



Central team members Marie-Jeanne Elonga (standing, second from left) and Monica Esquivel (seated, on right) visited the RSCJ, associates and staff from Ottawa, Ontario, during their recent visit to the United States – Canada Province.

By being at the U.N., we have multiplied our potential impact in ways that were unimaginable to both Sophie and Philippine.

What bound us together as 20 largely international households is, of course, our unity as human beings despite our diversity. Nobody could boast of being the norm and our way of living together was to be discovered and formed one day at a time. We socialized together, we prayed in the church next door together, and the children learned to play together regardless of each one’s cultural background.

Slowly, but surely, we were building our new intercultural community among those coming from very diverse cultures, backgrounds and languages. Respecting and valuing one another as we are; appreciating and accepting our differences; celebrating our common feasts in ways that allowed for different cultural expressions; able or learning to speak one or two of our common languages; recognizing God’s presence within each one. These were some of the ways that led us to communion.

For me intercultural living is a gift, but one that requires daily commitment and effort because, ultimately, it is a relationship!

Conclusion

These three dimensions of internationality call us to cross new frontiers: global mobility/displacement of peoples, international advocacy and deeper interculturality. A contemplative gaze upon reality cannot but lead us to want to make life more human by acknowledging and acting upon our common humanity. This, in turn, will lead to greater understanding, solidarity and harmony within and across borders.

New frontiers are calling us. ✦

Cecile Meijer, RSCJ, was the Society’s NGO representative at the United Nations in New York, 2003-2017.

Students preparing to facilitate dialogue at International Heads Conference

By Suzanne Cooke, RSCJ



More than 40 students are receiving training by the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change in order to serve as discussion facilitators at the VI International Sacred Heart Leaders Conference.

Representatives from Sacred Heart schools in Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, New Zealand, North America and South America will be participating in the VI International Sacred Heart Leaders Conference in Miami, Florida, April 22-27, 2020.

Recognizing the climate crisis as one of the most pressing issues facing humanity and inspired by Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'*, the Planning Committee has entitled the conference: *Caring for Our Common Home*. During the conference, participants will both discuss the challenges posed to all by climate crisis and explore specific ways through education that Sacred Heart school communities might imagine ways to create a more sustainable world.

As we get closer to the conference's opening, excitement is mounting at Carrollton School of the Sacred Heart in Miami. The sense of expectancy is particularly true for 44 students who have been asked and are receiving special training to act as discussion facilitators.

The students look forward to contributing to the overall success of the conference by serving as table leaders. In this

role, the students will facilitate tables discussions about the challenges posed by the climate crisis. Qualifications for this role included linguistic skills, the desire to understand others, openness to changing perspectives and the desire to act on behalf of our fragile home, the earth.

To ensure the success of the discussion leaders, Carrollton is partnering with Generation Global (GG) in the training of the students. Generation Global is a pioneering global education program within the Co-existence Portfolio of the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change. GG equips teachers with dialogue skills and resources that cultivate critical thinking and open-mindedness in young people.

In addition to being trained in dialogue skills, the students are also exploring the main issues around climate change; for instance, the difference between climate change and weather, the global impact of climate change, and the justice element of climate change.

In order to be prepared to facilitate dialogue on this topic, students also are researching why people have such deeply held feelings on the issue, as well as the science of climate change.

This training has been both hands-on and delivered as live webinars.

"The student leaders at Carrollton have been practicing their self-awareness, critical thinking and ability to hold a space for dialogue about challenging topics, such as climate change," said Gina del Tito of the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change. "They have not only gained confidence in their own skills of dialogue, but through dialogue facilitation are learning how to listen empathetically to others, to suspend judgment and to allow space for a new understanding to emerge."

Inspired by the conviction that young people have much to teach us, the Planning Committee believes that all the delegates will greatly appreciate having a student voice at the conference. ✦

Suzanne Cooke, RSCJ, is the head of the Conference of Sacred Heart Education.

For more information:

- sacredheartusc.education/vi-international-heads-conference
- institute.global/co-existence/generation-global



The provincial teams of the nine provinces of the Philippine Duchesne Region who gathered for a meeting in Cuba shared gifts from their countries.

Los equipos provinciales de las nueve provincias de la región Filipina Duchesne reunidos en Cuba para un encuentro compartieron regalos de sus países.

Building a future together as one region: Meeting of the Philippine Region in Cuba

By Diane Roche, RSCJ

The 35 Religious of the Sacred Heart gathered at the Casa Sacerdotal conference center in Havana, Cuba, on December 1, 2019, represented the provincial teams of the nine provinces that comprise the Philippine Duchesne Region of the Society of the Sacred Heart, along with four members of the congregation's Central Team from Rome.

As Esperanza Calabuig, RSCJ, provincial of the Antilles, pointed out in her welcoming remarks, this was a historic moment, bringing together RSCJ from North, South and Central America, many of whom had never met one another before. During these days, they would attempt to listen to the voice of the Spirit calling them to “be one Body” and to build a future together as one region.

Barbara Dawson, RSCJ, superior general, offered a warm welcome. Monica Esquivel, RSCJ, from the Central Team, invited the group to dare to think boldly about the future of the region during the week we would be together. We would focus

on naming initial steps that could deepen our sense of being a region and help us imagine what we might want to create together and what we might need to let go of, in order for that new thing to come to life.

For the next five days, the group divided into different teams of five or six people to share the reality of life in each province. These groups generated deep questions for reflection and searched for some common ground.

Together we created a detailed timeline of the history of the region, including interprovincial groups such as leadership of the Antilles, United States – Canada and Mexico provinces; the network of formal education; the network of popular education; and various formation meetings.

The process used elements of Theory U and both right- and left-brain thinking. We drew “portraits” of our provinces, reflected on a synthesis of several challenging articles by sociologists. We prayed using poetry, music, dance and silence.

Construyendo juntas un futuro como región: Encuentro de la Región Filipina en Cuba

Por Diane Roche, RSCJ

Traducción en español por Lolín Menéndez RSCJ

Las 35 Religiosas del Sagrado Corazón reunidas en el centro de conferencias de la Casa Sacerdotal de La Habana, Cuba, el 1ero de diciembre de 2019, representaban los equipos provinciales de las nueve provincias que componen la región Filipina Duchesne de la Sociedad del Sagrado Corazón, junto con cuatro miembros del Equipo Central de la Congregación, venidas de Roma.

Como señaló Esperanza Calabuig RSCJ, Provincial de Las Antillas, en sus palabras de bienvenida, era un momento histórico, pues reunía RSCJ de América del Norte, del Centro y del Sur, muchas de las cuales nunca se habían conocido. Durante esos días intentarían escuchar la voz del Espíritu llamándolas a ser “*un solo Cuerpo*” y a construir juntas un futuro como una región.

Barbara Dawson RSCJ, Superiora General, ofreció una cordial bienvenida. Mónica Esquivel RSCJ, del Equipo Central, invitó al grupo a arriesgarse a pensar audazmente sobre el futuro de la región durante la semana que pasaríamos juntas. Nos centraríamos en nombrar los pasos iniciales que podrían profundizar nuestros sentido de ser una región y nos ayudarían a imaginar lo que podríamos crear juntas y lo que tendríamos que dejar caer para que algo nuevo cobre vida.

Durante los próximos cinco días el grupo se dividió en diferentes equipos de cinco o seis personas cada uno para compartir la realidad de cada provincia. Los grupos generaron preguntas profundas para reflexionar, y buscaron elementos comunes.

Creamos juntas una línea de tiempo detallada sobre la historia de la región, incluyendo grupos interprovinciales,

By the end of our second day with the Central Team, we began to name “the what, the how and the who” of a few concrete and realistic steps that would help us become more aware of ourselves as a region and imagine some common projects, knowing that these choices would also involve some letting go of other projects.

On December 4, the entire group piled into comfortable tour busses and spent the day exploring the Viñales valley about three hours outside of Havana, famous for its tobacco fields and an impressive cave, complete with an underground river.

We returned to the Casa Sacerdotal after dark, impressed with what we had seen: well-maintained roads, a country that delivers electricity to 95 percent of its citizens (despite the current embargo) and some encouragement of private enterprises (tourist attractions, souvenirs, a crowded but well organized restaurant).

For the next two and a half days with facilitation from Fernanda Vacas, RSCJ, from Venezuela and Sheila Hammond,

RSCJ, from United States – Canada, we continued to revisit and refine the themes that had arisen during our initial time together. Most of the Central Team left us, but Sister Esquivel stayed on. Three main proposals began to take shape:

1. We each invest time in learning all we can about the reality being lived in the various provinces that make up the Philippine Region.
2. We work together on one project, perhaps related to migration or care for the Earth.
3. We develop new and effective ways to communicate among ourselves and with all the members of the region.

Many people committed themselves to language study and to using programs like Zoom, DuoLingo and WhatsApp to stay in touch with one another. However, the real work of helping this region see itself as one body committed to sharing resources and making decisions together for the good of the whole is still ahead of us.

como el de liderazgo de las provincias de Las Antillas, Estados Unidos-Canadá, y México, la red de educación formal, la red de educación popular, y varios encuentros de formación.

El proceso utilizó elementos de la Teoría U y del pensamiento con el hemisferio derecho e izquierdo del cerebro. Dibujamos “retratos” de nuestras provincias, reflexionamos sobre una síntesis de diversos artículos desafiantes escritos por sociólogos. Oramos usando poesía, música, danza y silencio.

Al final del segundo día con el Equipo Central, comenzamos a nombrar el “qué, cómo quién” de algunos pasos concretos y realistas que podrían ayudarnos a tomar conciencia de nosotras como región, e imaginar algunos proyectos comunes, conscientes que estas opciones involucran algún dejar caer de otros proyectos.

El 4 de diciembre todo el grupo subió a cómodos autobuses y pasó el día explorando el valle de Viñales, a unas tres horas de La Habana, famoso por sus campos de tabaco e impresionante caverna con un río subterráneo.

Regresamos a la Casa Sacerdotal al atardecer, impresionadas por lo que habíamos visto: carreteras bien mantenidas, un país

que suministra electricidad a 95 por ciento de la población (a pesar del embargo actual), y algo de estímulo a la economía privada (atracciones turísticas, suvenires, un restaurante muy concurrido pero bien organizado).

Durante los dos próximos días, con la facilitación de Fernanda Vacas RSCJ, de Venezuela y Sheila Hammond RSCJ, de Estados Unidos – Canadá, continuamos a revisar y refinar los temas que surgieron durante nuestro primer momento juntas. Tres miembros del Equipo Central nos dejaron, pero la Hermana Esquivel se quedó con nosotras. Tres propuestas principales comenzaron a plasmarse:

1. Cada una dedica tiempo a aprender todo lo que pueda sobre la realidad vivida en las diferentes provincias que componen la región Filipina.
2. Trabajamos juntas en un proyecto, quizás sobre la inmigración o el cuidado de la tierra.
3. Desarrollamos maneras nuevas y eficaces de comunicarnos entre nosotras y con todos los miembros de la región.

Countries of the Philippine
Duchesne Region
(formed in 1916)

Países de la Región
Filipina Duchesne
(formada en 1916)



Group activities brought participants together, including the creation of a detailed timeline of the history of the Philippine Duchesne Region.

Actividades conjuntas reunieron al grupo, incluyendo la creación de una línea de tiempo de la historia de la región Filipina Duchesne.



Argentina



Brazil



Canada



Chile



Colombia



Cuba



Haiti



Mexico



Peru



Puerto Rico



USA



Uruguay



Venezuela



During their time in Cuba, the Provincial Team met with Cuban alumnae, colleagues and friends.

Mientras estuvieron en Cuba, el Equipo Provincial se reunió con Antiguas Alumnas, colegas y amigos cubanos.



The sisters spent a day exploring the Viñales valley outside of Havana, famous for its tobacco fields (top) and an impressive cave, complete with an underground river.

Las Hermanas pasaron un día explorando el valle de Viñales, cerca de de La Habana, famoso por sus campos de tabaco y por una impresionante cueva, que cuenta con un río subterráneo.

There is a small communications committee, originally formed at the 2016 General Chapter in Nemi, Italy, which was given the mandate of animating the life of the region. Sisters Vacas and Hammond will work with that committee to nurture the ideas surfaced from our group and help them take concrete form.

As the gathering moved into its last days, there were three experiences that deepened our understanding of the Cuban revolution and the impact on the lives of the people who lived through it.

The first was a gathering in small groups with Cuban men and women of all ages, all of whom had some relationship with the Society of the Sacred Heart.

There were young adults who had participated in leadership workshops given by Imma DeStefanis, RSCJ, and Reyna Gonzalez, RSCJ, of the Stuart Center. There were also older men and women, some of them alumnae/i of our school in Havana, which had been taken over by the government and

Muchas de nosotras nos comprometimos al estudio de idiomas y a usar programas como Zoom, DuoLingo and WhatsApp para seguir en contacto entre nosotras. No obstante, el verdadero trabajo de compartir recursos y tomar decisiones juntas para el bien común todavía está por ver.

Hay un pequeño comité de comunicaciones formado originalmente en el Capitulo general de 2016 en Nemi, Italia, que recibió el mandato de animar la vida de la región. Las Hermanas Hammond y Vacas trabajarán con ese comité para fomentar las ideas que surgieron de nuestro grupo y ayudar a que tomen forma concreta.

Al llegar la reunión a los últimos días, tuvimos tres experiencias que nos ayudaron a comprender la revolución cubana y su impacto en las vidas de los que la vivieron.

El primero fue un encuentro de grupos de hombres y mujeres cubanos de todas las edades, cada uno relacionado de alguna manera con la Sociedad del Sagrado Corazón.

Entre ellos había jóvenes adultos que habían participado en talleres de liderazgo impartidos por Imma DeStefanis, RSCJ, y Reyna Gonzalez, RSCJ, del Centro Stuart. También se

converted into a hotel. Some were proud of the education and healthcare they and their families had been able to receive under the Socialist government. Others mentioned not being able to speak openly about their Catholic faith, particularly in the early days of the revolution and of being denied positions of influence because they would not join the Communist party.

Everyone agreed that the renewed economic sanctions on the part of the United States are causing great discouragement just as things seemed to be getting better.

The second experience came as the result of a presentation from the woman who heads the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Cuba. She had heard about our meeting and was eager to tell us about the new openness in Cuba to any and all forms of religious expression. Islam, Catholicism, many Protestant sects, Scientology, Judaism and animist religions (like Santería) are all present on the island.

On the last day of the regional meeting, the group took a walking tour of old Havana. We saw forts, barracks and

churches dating from the 1500s and passed down streets full of shops.

It was dusk as we arrived at the square in front of the famous Hotel Inglaterra, which, along with all the ornate and stately buildings around it, was glowing with floodlights. The tour guide explained that the government had just recently invested an enormous amount of money restoring and upgrading many historic buildings in the hope of attracting foreign tourists.

We left Cuba with a renewed appreciation for the courage and resilience of the Cuban people. We experienced a strong sense that our work toward becoming one Philippine Region will somehow serve to help us know how to respond in the years to come to the geo-political and ecological challenges we know are ahead. ✦

Diane Roche, RSCJ, is a member of the Provincial Leadership Team.

encontraban hombres y mujeres mayores, y algunas antiguas de nuestros colegios de La Habana. Algunos estaban orgullosos de la educación y servicios sanitarios que sus familias habían recibido bajo el gobierno Socialista. Otros mencionaron no poder hablar abiertamente sobre su fe católica, especialmente durante los primeros días de la revolución, y no poder acceder a posiciones de influencia por no adherirse al partido Comunista.

Todos estuvieron de acuerdo que las sanciones económicas por parte de los Estados Unidos están causando gran desaliento, justo en el momento en que las cosas parecían mejorar.

La segunda experiencia ocurrió a través de la presentación de la persona que encabeza el Ministerio de Asuntos Religiosos de Cuba. Ella tuvo conocimiento de nuestra reunión y expresó el deseo de contarnos sobre la nueva apertura de Cuba a cualquier forma de expresión religiosa. El Islam, el Catolicismo, varias sectas Protestantes, la Cienciología, el Judaísmo y religiones animistas (como la Santería) están presentes en la isla.

El último día del encuentro el grupo dio un recorrido a pie por la Habana Vieja. Vimos fuertes, cuarteles e iglesias que databan de los años 1500, y pasamos por calles repletas de tiendas.

Ya antedecía cuando llegamos a la plaza frente al famoso Hotel Inglaterra que, junto con todos los edificios ornamentados y majestuosos a su alrededor, brillaba con la luz de reflectores. El guía nos explicó que el gobierno había invertido recientemente una enorme cantidad de dinero para restaurar y renovar varios edificios históricos con la esperanza de atraer turistas extranjeros.

Dejamos Cuba con apreciación renovada por el coraje y la resiliencia del pueblo cubano. Experimentamos un sentido fuerte de que nuestro trabajo hacia convertirnos en una Región Filipina de alguna manera nos ayudaría a cómo responder en los próximos años a los desafíos geopolíticos y ecológicos que sabemos hay por delante. ✦

Diane Roche, RSCJ, es miembro del equipo de liderazgo provincial de la Provincia de Estados Unidos – Canadá.

Central Team Visits the United States – Canada Province

On September 16, 2019, members of the Central Team, formally known as the General Council, of the Society of the Sacred Heart arrived in Albany, New York, to commence their month-long visit in the United States – Canada (USC) Province.

“We visited to discuss new ways to connect, listen to the voices of the USC province and their vision for the future, as well as share our vision and hopes for the Society,” said Barbara Dawson, RSCJ, superior general.

Building communion and being in union with others was at the heart of the Central Team’s visit as they traveled throughout Canada and the United States, visiting RSCJ communities, Associates, Sacred Heart school communities and other educational ministries. In the spirit of being one Body, the Central Team wants to know its members as well as the students and educators of the Sacred Heart and learn from them and their reality.

The Society’s mission is to reveal the love of God in the heart of the world. These visits open up to the Society’s leaders the reality of Canada and the United States; and each personal interaction contributes to the Central Team’s knowledge of the Society, of the world and how the Sacred Heart community lives out the Society’s mission. Members of the province, likewise, learn more about the internationality of the Society and its mission lived throughout the world. ✦



While visiting with students at the **Academy of the Sacred Heart** in St. Charles, Missouri, Marie-Jeanne Elonga, RSCJ, shows the students where she is from: the Democratic Republic of Congo.



Daphne Sequeira, RSCJ, visits with students at **The Regis School of the Sacred Heart** in Houston, Texas.



Meeting with administrators and RSCJ at the **University of San Diego**, which was originally founded in 1949 as San Diego College for Women.



RSCJ and Associates from **Halifax, Nova Scotia**, met with members of the Central Team.

At the end of the month-long visit, the two teams met together: (from left) Barbara Dawson (superior general), Theresa Moser (provincial team), Maureen Glavin (provincial team), Sheila Hammond (provincial), Monica Esquivel (central team), Marie-Jeanne Elonga (central team), Donna Collins (provincial team), Diane Roche (provincial team) and Daphne Sequeira (central team). Not pictured: Isabelle Lagneau (central team).





Muriel Cameron, RSCJ, visiting a class at Kyamusansala Sacred Heart Primary School.

A dream becomes a pearl

By Muriel Cameron, RSCJ

In 1993, after serving in ministry at Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska, I returned to New Orleans, Louisiana, in order to open Sophie Barat House, now one of the United States – Canada (USC) Province’s four spirituality centers. At that time, Hilda Bamwine, RSCJ, from the Uganda/Kenya (UGK) Province had just begun her studies in New Orleans. She often said to me: “I have a dream for us to minister together in Uganda and Kenya.”

She planted a seed, and we held on to this dream.

After completing her studies, Hilda returned to her native province. Over the years, we had commitments elsewhere that kept us from serving together, but the dream never died. It reminded me of the African American poet Langston Hughes,

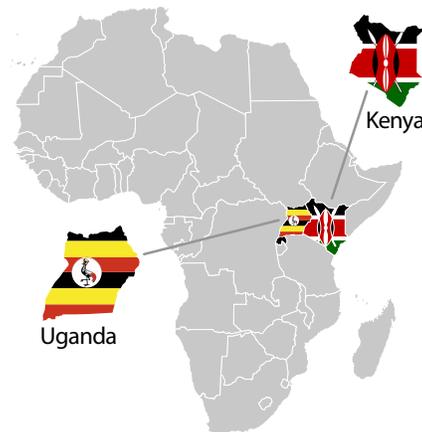
who wrote: “Hold fast to dreams, for when dreams die, life is a broken winged bird that cannot fly!”

To my delight, in 2018, Annet Nankusu, RSCJ, provincial of the UGK province, invited me to give presentations on the philosophy of Sacred Heart education to faculty and staff in Sacred Heart schools and other ministries, and to direct retreats for some of the RSCJ. The invitation was to stay for two months, July and August 2019. I accepted with joy.

Uganda has been referred to as “the Pearl of Africa,” and there I encountered warm hearts, laughter and a variety of breathtaking landscapes: mountains, banana plantations, tea plantations, pasture lands, desert starkness and the renowned Lake Victoria.



Following a retreat with Sister Cameron at Lake Nagagabo in Uganda, Hilda Ayebazidwe, RSCJ (left), catches a ride on a motorcycle and Elizabeth Casyoka, RSCJ (right), bids her farewell.



The first “pearl” I experienced was the time I spent at the Kyamusansala Sacred Heart Primary School, the home base for my stay, located in the southwest region of Uganda known as Masaka. The headmistress of “Kyamusansala” was none other than my dear friend, Sister Hilda Bamwine!

This school was greatly supported by the United States – Canada Province in its beginnings. Today, it serves over 700 primary school boarders who begin the day at 5 a.m. singing prayers, then dedicating their energies to learning, playing and treasuring the opportunity for a strong education, in a nation where the Society’s first commitment to educate the population was made a little over 50 years ago.

This school showed me first-hand the Society’s mission and commitment to providing a strong education for young people. It is quite noteworthy, also, that the UGK Province has a dream of building a school comparable to “Kyamusansala” in Kenya by 2023 to honor the Society’s 50 years in Kenya.

After spending time at the school, Sister Bamwine coordinated a tour of the province throughout both Uganda and Kenya. Everywhere I visited, I was blessed with open RSCJ arms and the opportunity to understand their ministries from formal education, clinics, AIDS care/education programs to retreat work, work in universities and seminaries. I experienced first-hand where so many members of the USC Province formerly served.

At community prayer, I was often struck as intentions for ex-pat RSCJ were prayed for, such as the consolation of Connie Dryden, RSCJ, after her sister died. I felt they were living our *Chapter Calls* to be and act as one Body. To me, it’s about not only sharing of human resources and finances but the prayerful support that crosses oceans and continents.

Another “pearl” during my time was feeling at home as I reconnected with RSCJ from the UGK Province who had formerly studied in the USC Province. And, before departing for home, I was privileged to participate in a gathering of all professed RSCJ, organized by Nancy Koke, RSCJ, and held in the novitiate property in Mbikko, Uganda.

Lucy Toror, RSCJ, gave a presentation on the 2019 justice, peace and integrity of creation (JPIC) meeting in the Philippines, vibrantly drawing all of us into her experience and stoking our passion for justice.

Solome Najjuka, RSCJ, covered, in depth, the devastation still experienced by those in Fukushima, Japan. And, she spoke of the increase of nuclear reactors worldwide as global consumerism commands a need for more and more energy and the threat they pose to our common home.

Betty Nakayiza, RSCJ, who did a sabbatical last year at Boston College, enlightened us more on our *Chapter Calls* to live more humanly and to create silence, sharing current insights on the practice of mindfulness, a beacon of hope as its practice is expanding in every continent.



Lunchtime for students at Kyamusansala Sacred Heart Primary School.

And lastly, Noellina Namusisi, RSCJ, and Eva Busingye, RSCJ, gave inspiring reflections from their Society renewal in Rome this past summer.

Through my RSCJ sisters, I experienced a palpable sense of the gift and potential the international Society of the Sacred Heart holds to “heighten our awareness of a common goal for transformation in favor of justice for those living in poverty and those rejected by the world.” (*Being Artisans of Hope in Our Blessed and Broken World*)

I was reminded that my contact with students and faculty was not only personally significant and educative, but that our connection enabled them to realize they are part of a reality larger than immediate surroundings. This stirred a desire in me to think and dream of ways to foster greater hope, energy and creativity to transform unjust structures.

No doubt the greatest and most profound “pearl” of this entire experience was the vibrant warmth and lively embodiment of my RSCJ sisters and their collaborators in our spirituality and mission.

In the Society’s General Chapter 2016 documents is an image of the Society as “a body moved from its center by Love ... weaving different kinds of connections.” My experience was surely that. I received unimaginable gifts expanding my heart and mind. The personal relationships strengthened in this visit have enhanced my sense of union with my sisters in Uganda and Kenya, as well as new buds of consciousness concerning realities of other cultures and nations.

Even months later, I am still processing these two meaningful months. They were real and no longer a dream. I am convinced my memories will last not only in a sentimental manner, but serve as a call to greater transformation according to the Gospel calls of today. ✦

Muriel Cameron, RSCJ, is a member of the novitiate community in Chicago, Illinois, and ministers in retreats and spiritual accompaniment. Erin Everson, the communications coordinator for the province, contributed to this article.

Teaching seminarians in Uganda

By Nancy Koke, RSCJ

For four years, I have had the privilege of teaching “Remedial English” and “Introduction to Spirituality” to first-year seminarians at St. Mbaaga’s Major Seminary in Kampala, Uganda. The classes have averaged between 25 and 30 students, aged 18-40, of various backgrounds and levels of learning.

I was challenged by their insights, openness, humility, honesty and, for the most part, genuine effort to learn the topics covered in our spirituality class and to improve their ability to write in and speak English.

I tried to instill this spirit in the classroom and encourage the seminarians to have this same spirit in their interactions with others, whether at the seminary or in their homes and parishes, where they are involved in pastoral ministry.

The most meaningful part of this work was my ability to create an environment that would, hopefully, put them in closer relationship with God.

During my time teaching, I was continually challenged to deepen my own relationship with God and to be as consistent as possible in witnessing to the reality of what I was teaching about God, others and the care of our Earth.

There are very few women teaching in diocesan seminaries in Uganda. I feel very grateful to have had the opportunity to offer a woman’s perspective regarding the Church and many of the issues the

THERE ARE VERY FEW WOMEN TEACHING IN DIOCESAN SEMINARIES IN UGANDA. I FEEL VERY GRATEFUL TO HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO OFFER A WOMAN'S PERSPECTIVE REGARDING THE CHURCH...



Nancy Koke, RSCJ, with seminarians outside St. Mbaaga's Major Seminary in Kampala, Uganda.

Church is facing today, as well as the positive ways Pope Francis continually calls us to respond to the “complex crisis, which is both environmental and social.”

He wrote, “Strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded and, at the same time, protecting nature.” (*Laudato Si'*, #139)

In the classroom

We began every class with a spiritual song and silencing exercises. All of the students were grateful to have that time

to get in touch with themselves and to meet God through the words of the songs and the silent prayer that followed.

Each semester, the seminarians were required to do a special project. In the first semester, they wrote about a saint and a non-canonized saint and gave an oral report in class. In the second semester, they were divided into five groups and wrote their own versions of the Stations of the Cross, including examples of the suffering in the world today. The whole seminary prayed with their Stations on the Friday before Good Friday.

We also had time for engaging discussions. Most recently, we've talked about global warming, after watching a YouTube video by Greta Thunberg, and our need to take action to care for our world in more concrete ways. This led the first-year seminarians to begin a project to deal with the disposable plastics that are used on the campus.

I felt as if I was being called to transform the seminarians and to be transformed through my mutual interaction with them, “seeing the world through the perspective of God’s compassion, engaging in education and prayerful reflection and acting from a deep place of love...”*

False concepts about God, prayer, Catholicity, ecumenism, community and evangelization were brought to light, as well as the realization that behind structures and organizations, there are human attitudes and tendencies, which are sources of oppression. All of us can be “inadvertently” contributing “to the very structures we wish to transform.”*

And when I was faced with my own limits, failures and vulnerabilities, I recognized that “transformation is ultimately the work of the Spirit, that power is a share in the Spirit’s energy and that hope is a gift we receive from the Spirit.”* ✦

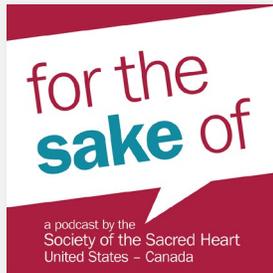
Nancy Koke, RSCJ, now resides in Mbikko, Uganda. She ministers to those in initial formation, is in charge of ongoing formation and offers retreats, spiritual accompaniment and workshops to individuals and groups.

* Sisters Cameron and Koke both quote the Society's document, *Being Artisans of Hope in Our Blessed and Broken World*. For more information: rscjinternational.org/justice-peace-and-integrity-creation

Tune in to our new podcast!

By Erin Everson

For The Sake Of is a new podcast series, produced by the Society of the Sacred Heart, United States – Canada Province, about faith, life and what it all means.



The series features Kim King, RSCJ, in conversation with a variety of members of our wider Sacred Heart community, exploring personal stories about the integration of faith and life.

For The Sake Of, season 1, was released on December 12, 2019, Saint Madeleine Sophie Barat's birthday. It features three episodes, or conversations, with current and former Sacred Heart educators, each of whom met the Society and Network schools in very different ways.

The podcast project came about, in part, from the efforts of the province's Formation to Mission committee.

Sister King, as host, worked alongside the production team of Erin Everson, communications coordinator for the province; Claire Lorentzen, director of mission engagement for the Conference of Sacred Heart Education; and Eliza Lynn, mission advancement manager for the province.

As a team, they carefully discerned the intention and format of the podcast and each offered her many gifts to make the series a reality.

Everson served as director and editor, Lorentzen as producer and first guest on the podcast, and Lynn as producer and composer of music for the podcast.

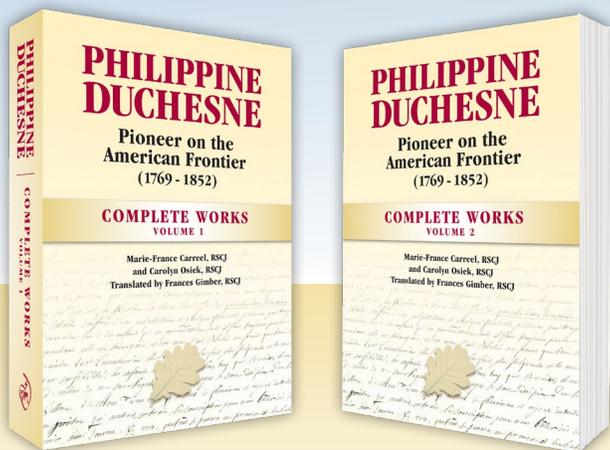
You can listen to the podcast through Apple Podcasts, Spotify or our website at rscj.org/forthesakeof.

Kim King, RSCJ, currently lives in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and serves as director of Barat Spirituality Centre. She grew up listening to stories of both her father's and grandfather's



time in radio. Her mother taught her about using inflection and the joy of expression through reading aloud together. She discovered the power of her own public voice as a senior in

high school when she created a personal experience to fulfill a speech class requirement. By the end of her 15-minute speech, the whole class was convinced she'd actually met the Queen of England. Since then, she has delighted in using her creativity and voice in tandem through many different opportunities, including writing stories, essays and poetry; storytelling; teaching; and blogging.



Life on the Missouri frontier in the early 1800s was harsh.

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A contemporary frontier for the Society of the Sacred Heart is embracing the internationality of the congregation. Pictured is an example of this internationality: In August 2019, 15 RSCJ from Brazil, Peru, Chile and the United States, who were professed less than 10 years, gathered in Lima, Peru.



4



10

In December 2019, 35 Religious of the Sacred Heart from the Philippine Duchesne Region met in Havana, Cuba, bringing together RSCJ from North, South and Central America, many of whom had never met one other before.



16

Members of the Central Team from Rome visited throughout the United States – Canada Province last fall. Pictured at Stone Ridge School of the Sacred Heart in Bethesda, Maryland, are (from left) Sheila Hammond, provincial; Barbara Dawson, superior general; and Marie-Jeanne Elonga, Central Team member.

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