RSHM SOUNDINGS is a quarterly publication of the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary, Eastern and Western American and Northern European Provinces, and Zambezi Region. Waves sent out, reflected back, reveal an inner reality not always evident on the surface. Thus SOUNDINGS probes RSHM life in expanding circles of ministry and community. You, our readers, are part of our life. We invite your comments and suggestions so that your thoughts may be reflected in these pages.



Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary English Speaking Provinces Volume XXV, Number 1 Spring 2017

# LET ALL CREATURES GIVE THANKS

BURLINGTON, VERMONT- It was early February in Vermont. I was waiting for my breakfast at Fanny Allen Rehab Center. The waiting felt longer given my fractured wrist and hip. (Miraculously neither required surgery.) Happily I had brought my copy of Soundings along. The theme of the issue, Windows, couldn't have been more fortuitous. As I looked out the window from my hospital bed, the red brick building so reminded me of St. Joseph's novitiate. My reflections made me forget about waiting for my breakfast. I loved the different stories of our sisters and it made me think of what a difference one life can make. I felt a sense of pride and belonging. My own experience in religious community was immeasurably rich and enduring.

Fanny Allen, RHSJ (Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph) was the daughter of Ethan Allen, a renowned hero of the Green Mountain Boys. Fanny herself was originally, like her father, a follower of the Enlightenment who scoffed at religious matters. Yet when she went to Montreal to learn French, she served in the Hotel Dieu. She had a religious experience that compelled her to join the sisters with whom she had served. Fanny had a literary legacy from her self-educated father, who produced a large work on theology in which he attacked the New England clergy whom he regarded as "insufficiently attached to the comby Roddy Cleary



mon man." All the while he himself maintained a devotion to God. His daughter became a model of reconciliation between peoples. After her early demise (1784-1819) her influence led many Vermonters, including her one-time fiancee, to develop closer ties with Canada and even with Catholicism.

My son, Tom, never fails to amaze me with his ability to come up with analogies. My reflections reminded him of an episode on the Muppets in which Bernadette Peters sang a memorable song, 'Just One Person', to a dejected Kermit the Frog. You might remember that Jim Henson, the creator of the Muppets, died much too early. When a Muppets script writer had a difficult time incorporating the news of Jim Henson's death into the program, he came up with the idea of the Muppets receiving a letter of condolence regarding the death of their creator. The best way they could think of to express their love and overwhelming sadness was to once again sing the song, "Just One Person." The lyrics of the song say, in part: 'If just one person can believe in you, strong enough and deep enough ... ' The song goes on to add more singers until it concludes with the lyrics: 'and if all those people can believe in you...maybe even you can believe in you too.

I have an overwhelming sense of gratitude to my religious sisters for continuing to support me on my own faith journey in coming to believe in myself.♦

### A LAMP UNTO HER FEET

In her own words,

This is the story of Vanessa who graduated from South Central LAMP. Vanessa participates in the parenting program which gives her confidence to overcome many obstacles in her life.

LOS ANGELES, CA My life before attending SC LAMP was very different than it is now. Before, I did not know the English language and I could not communicate with people when I would go to the grocery store or when I would go to the doctor.

I am a single mom of two children and my life has definitely changed, not only as a mother but as a woman as well. I used to lose patience with myself and with my children. My way of disciplining them before was by yelling at them due to my impatience. I used to have very low self-esteem and I would always cry due to past experiences in my life. I have raised my children on my own.

I do try to motivate myself and my children by saying that anything is possible because I look at how far I have come. It has been seven years since I separated from the fathers of my children. I never had support from my family. I left my home at seventeen years of age with my sister, and then I came to live with my friend. I have pretty much been on my own.

Since I came to SC LAMP, I have definitely learned to value myself more, and become a good leader and mother. SC LAMP teachers have taught me how to develop in my relationship with others, communication with my children, and how to deal with problems that may come up in my life. This program challenged me to think about the decisions that I make for myself and for my kids on a daily basis. I never

### NEXT ISSUE: TURNING POINTS



ESL Class at South Central LAMP, conducted by Sr. Cathy Garcia, RSHM (standing)

knew any of this before and I am grateful to know it now.

After SC LAMP, my goal is to continue to study and pursue a GED. I would like to work in medical clinics. I do not see myself working in a factory, but rather in a place where I can grow and gain professional experience. I know it is a step by step process but it is not impossible. Back then, I knew no English and I felt useless. I am thankful I was able to walk through that dark tunnel and get to where I am now, so it is definitely possible.

You may think that you will never change especially when you are stuck in the same routine with no hope. But looking at myself now, I am happy I made a decision that changed my life. I'm grateful to all my teachers. Without this program and all the relationships I made here, I don't know what would have become of me. SC LAMP, thank you! •

### TO DINE GRATEFULLY: A TABLE BLESSING

Submitted by Annie Randazzo

O Lord, refresh our sensibilities. Give us this day our daily tastes. Restore us to soups that spoons will not sink in, and sauces which are never the same twice. Raise up among us stews with more gravy than we have bread to blot it with, and casseroles that put starch and substance into our limp modernity. Take away our fear of fat, and make us glad of the oil that ran upon Aaron's beard. Give us pasta with a hundred fillings, and rice in a thousand variations. Above all, give us grace to fast until we come to a refreshed sense of what we have, and then to dine gratefully on all that comes to hand.

Drive far from us, O Most Bountiful, the demons that possess us. Deliver us from the counting of calories and the bondage of nutrition. Set us free once more in our own land where we shall serve you who have blessed us with the dew of heaven, the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine.

Robert Farrar Capon

#### THANK YOU, MISS MARKHAM by Martha Harkness

TARRYTOWN, NY When I was in elementary school I took piano lessons from Miss Markham. She lived on one side of the church where my father was the pastor, our family lived on the other. I remember those piano lessons well, or rather I remember her. The lessons took place at an upright piano in her front room, next to a much bigger room with a grand piano. From time to time she invited me further into her apartment for a cookie and a little visit after my lesson. The place had a musty, well lived-in smell, a warm and cozy smell if ever there was one.

I don't remember anything much about our conversations. Like the light in her apartment, my memory of them is dim. I do remember how wonderful it felt to be in her presence, the center of her attention. As I grew older, my mother sent me to a much younger teacher who taught me pieces that were more challenging. However, I didn't apply myself. I missed Miss Markham. I was later to learn that she'd seen other talents in me.

One summer, after my first year in college, I took part in a talent show at our church. I read a poem I had written about the beloved house behind the church. It had just been torn down. Miss Markham was at the talent show that evening. After the program, I walked her across the street to her home. By that time, she had difficulty walking alone. I'll never forget what she said to me during our walk together. First she praised me for my earnest reading of my poem. Then she said the most unsettling thing I have ever heard: "Martha, you should become a minister!"

I was taken aback. The idea had never entered my mind! I'd never heard of, or met a minister who was not a man. Still, she continued talking as we sat down in her kitchen, as if to use her life as an example. With her lovely white hair pinned up on her head in a puffy style that was

### NOVICES REMEMBER AND GIVE THANKS

by Perpetual Muzivani, Plynet Tachekwa and Jane Chamalimba

BELO HORIZAONTE, BRAZIL As we were pondering this topic, Gratitude, many thoughts rushed into our minds. Then we decided to look back and reflect on our lives for the past two years as pre-novices.

We wish to thank our formator, Sr Lelia, and all the Sisters in the various communities in Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Mozambique who supported us in times of need and in our spiritual growth. In particular we want to extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Choma community who helped us mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. They kept on encouraging us in difficult times when we felt lonely and lost.

Not forgetting where we came from—we are grateful to our parents for their support, their understanding and for giving us the freedom to follow our vocation. May God bless them richly.

We are grateful also to the Christian community at large with

whom we journeyed in prayer and worship and for the opportunities we had to serve those in need-too many to mention by name. But a special thanks to our two little friends Busiku and Felix- their bright smiles and joy in living, despite their disabilities, encouraged us and helped us to be grateful for all of creation. Above all, we thank God for seeing us through our first stage of formation. During this time each of us has come to know God in a deeper way-a God who is so loving, who nurtures us like a mother and always welcomes us back, and is far more generous than we can imagine. In the words of Ps 116, we each say: How can I repay the Lord for His goodness to me?

THĂNK YOU TINOTENDA (Shona) TWALUMBA (Tonga) SIYABONGA (Ndebele) ZIKOMO (Nyanja) OBRIGADA (Portuguese).♦



Left to right: Perpetual Muzivani, Jane Chamalimba, and Plynet Tachekwa

popular in the early 1900s, and her rosy cheeks and crystal blue eyes sparkling, she declared, "My life has been one grand performance! I studied piano at Fontainebleau in Paris— I've seen the world!" I knew my world was just beginning.

When I think of all the women who I am grateful for-besides my own mother—she is at the top of the list! She saw something in me that I had not yet seen.

March 29th was the 30th anniversary of Martha's ordination to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament in the Presbyterian Church (USA) in Marshall, MI.♦

### FROM THE LIPS OF CHILDREN

I am thankful for **life**, the greatest thing God could ever give you. I am thankful for **having a family**. They are always there for you. I am thankful for **being able to afford what I have**. Right now in this world things are difficult because a lot of people are poor. I am lucky enough to have what I have.

I am thankful for **human rights**. This is more important than you think...it gives you choices to be free. I am thankful for **the world**. Without it we have nowhere to be. We are lucky to have everything we own...God had work to make all of this for us.

Katie - Grade 5 RSHM LIFE Center

- Thank you, God, for my warm, comfy bed
- and the beautiful, safe roof above my head.
- Thank you, God, for every piece of my clothes,
- my shoulders, my head, my fingers and toes.
- Thank you, God, for my family and friends,
- for these relationships that never end.
- Thank you, God, for my very own me, and helping me the best I can be.
- I have multiple things that I'm grateful for,
- Like animals, food, my clothes, and more.

#### Tess - Class V Marymount School of New York

Lord, I speak with you. You are the one who sent me into the world. You are the one who helps me. Thank you for the world, the planets, the stars, the moon, the sun, the oceans, the water, the ground, and thank you for me. I love you with my heart all clean because you are inside me. I wish you are ok, because if you are, I am too. Thank you God for everything.

#### Valerio- Grade 3

Marymount International School, Rome (continued on page 6)

### SEVENTY TIMES SEVEN BLESSINGS

by Joanne Safian, RSHM

(Greeting from Joanne Safian, RSHM General Secretary, at the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of Marymount International School, Rome)

ROME, ITALY First, on behalf of the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary, I want to congratulate Marymount International School on your 70<sup>th</sup> birthday—a wonderful milestone to be proud of.

As you know, our RSHM Mission is to know and love God, to make God known and loved so that all may have life. That was true in 1849 when the RSHM began and in 1946 when Marymount International was founded. And it is true today. The contexts have changed, but the mission remains.

Just as our Founders Jean Gailhac and Mère St Jean Cure Pelissier looked at the needs in Béziers, France in 1849, or Mother Gerard looked at the challenges of post-WWII Rome, when we look around, we see so many needs and challenges: conflict and violence in many parts of the world; the international refugee crisis; the plight of those who are marginalized by race, ethnicity, poverty, social status, religion, and gender; the diminishing resources of our planet and threats to its sustainability.

We are challenged to bring the light of the Gospel to these situations. We are all called to be disciples. And learning to answer that call is a major aspect of education here at Marymount.

Marymount's mission statement affirms that the school "aims to further the mission of the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary," guiding students "towards the achievement of their full potential." Marymount states its goal that every student "desire to celebrate God's love, respond generously to the needs of our world, and promote justice and dignity for all."

As we look to the future, academics will change in ways we cannot begin to imagine. And we do not know the specific global needs and challenges the next 70 years will bring. But we know that, grounded in and entrusted with carrying on a mission that has been handed down since 1849, Marymount will continue to empower its students to use their gifts and talents to respond courageously to the call to be disciples, so that all may have life. ◆



### THERE ARE NO WORDS . . .

by Maria Timoney, RSHM

WYTHEVILLE, VA "There are no words that could ever express my love and gratitude for everything that Legal Aid did for me and my daughter. We are now both working hard, earning our own money, are free and have a chance at a much better life". When Tammy first contacted us, she had just left her husband of 25 years accompanied by her 16 year old daughter. Her story emerged gradually.

Prior to her marriage, she had worked as a cook. After their first child was born, her husband moved the family to a very isolated part of the county and away from her family and friends. He controlled all the finances and gave her a signed check weekly to use for groceries and \$20 for gas. She had to bring the grocery receipt home and put it on the bulletin board. He either ignored her or spoke to her in a harsh and demeaning way for most of the marriage. The responsibility for the three children, the remoteness of the location. and the lack of child care made it impossible for her to work.

Neither she nor her husband had health insurance. He paid for his own medical care out of his earnings while she had to use the local free clinic. She developed a condition involving her foot that, untreated, made it difficult to stand for long periods. The treatment was not available through the free clinic. Initially, we represented Tammy in obtaining monthly child and temporary spousal support. She got a job as a cook but could only work part-time because she couldn't stand for long periods. After a lengthy court battle, we succeeded in obtaining permanent monthly spousal support in an amount that allowed her to purchase health insurance through the Affordable Care Act. She was also awarded a cash settlement that made it possible for her and her daughter to obtain a decent apartment and a second vehicle to enable the daughter to work and attend the local community college. My feeling of gratitude echoes hers for being able to make such a difference for my client!



Sharon first contacted Legal Aid in 2013. Her husband was terminally ill, her 27 year old son who lived at home had emotional problems and could not work, and she had health problems aggravated by her grief and stress that made it hard for her to maintain employment. She wanted desperately to keep the home she and her husband were buying and was overwhelmed with the mounting medical bills. I advised her that we could help her deal with the medical bills but that it was likely that she would lose the house.

A year later, she called back. Her husband had passed away and the loss of his income made it impossible for her to keep the home. She was finding it very hard to accept these losses and the pressure from creditors and the need to find other housing was almost too hard to bear. With encouragement from me and the help of her adult daughter, she packed up and moved from her home. Her health problems stabilized enough for her to return to work and we filed a bankruptcy for her that eliminated over \$300,000 in medical debt along with what was left owing on the home. The elimination of this debt meant that the wages she needed to support herself and her son would not be subject to garnishment. She is still grieving the loss of her husband and has concerns for her son and his future but I was grateful to have played a part in relieving some of the stress that burdened this proud and caring woman.♦

## A PILGRIMAGE

by Barry Kendall

CARLISLE, ENGLAND Having been a member of the Extended Family of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Mary for a short time and having learned of the history of Fr. Gailhac from Sr Pierre, I became more and more determined to visit Béziers, the place of his birth and the origin of the congregation.

An opportunity arose when my wife Barbara and I had booked a holiday in September 2014 to Estartit on the Costa Brava which we didn't realise at the time was only two hours away from the beautiful and ancient city of Béziers.

We arranged to travel up from Spain to Béziers where we received a wonderful and warm reception from Srs. Pierre and Andre and the Sisters living there. Over the two days we were given a very informative tour of the mother house (spending time in the crypt will stay with us forever) and places where Fr. Gailhac grew and spent his childhood. We visited the house where Appollonie lived, the village of Murviel where she grew up and the fabulous flower market in the Allees Paul Ricquet.

We owe a deep debt of gratitude to all the sisters for the lasting spiritual enlightenment and especially to Sisters Françoise and Bernadette at Bon Pasteur. We experienced this again on a recent visit when two friends Liz Nugent and Sandra White accompanied us on a trip to Béziers from Lourdes.

In the words of Liz "It goes without saying that Béziers is a beautiful city. I was struck by how familiar it all felt but also how much more beautiful than I had imagined. Going to Bon Pasteur and the mother house was a bit like coming home. We were infected by Sr Pierre's passion and by the kindness and hospitality we met. The calmness and serenity of the crypt and courtyard in the mother house will stay with me. We were only there for 24 hours but I will return! "◆

#### CONTRIBUTORS

Roddy O'Neill Cleary is retired and living in Burlington, Vermont.

Jane Chamalimba, Perpetual Muzivani, and Plynet Tachekwa are RSHM Novices in Belo Horizonte, Brazil.

Martha Harkness is the Pastoral care Coordinator at Marvmount Convent. Tarrytown. New York.

Barry Kendall is a member of the SHM Extended Family in Carlisle, England. Annie Randazzo is a member of the SHM Extended Family in Tarrytown, New York. Joanne Safian, RSHM is General Secretary of the RSHM in Rome, Italy. Vanessa is a graduate of South Central Lamp. Los Angeles, California.

Maria Timoney, RSHM is the Managing Attorney for the Southwest Virginia Legal Aid Society in Marion, Virginia.



LIPS OF CHILDREN cont. from pg. 4

Dear God, we want to thank you for keeping our families safe, for being there for us, and being kind to us. You have created us, and given us food and peace. Please bless our teachers. friends, and the people who have died. Thank you for everything you do.

Hanna, Molly, and friends - Grade 3 Religious Formation at St. Rosalie's, Hampton Bays, NY

Dear God, I thank you for forgiving my sins, though I'm not always good. Thank you for my family, for I wouldn't be here if it weren't for you. I thank you for my food, which some don't have. Thank you for the roof over my head, so I can stay dry. I thank you for my amazing life, and I hope to share it with others. I love you, God. Amen. Phoebe - Class III Marymount School of New York so I can learn and get smarter. so I am not hungry, because they love me. I am grateful for the LIFE Center because they help me with my homework. Joseph - Grade 3 RSHM LIFE Center

I am grateful for school I am grateful for food I am grateful for my family I am thankful for my life.

6

Permit No. 5432 YN , anis Plains, NY PAID U.S. Postage Non-Profit Org



ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Tarrytown, New York 10591 50 Wilson Park Drive