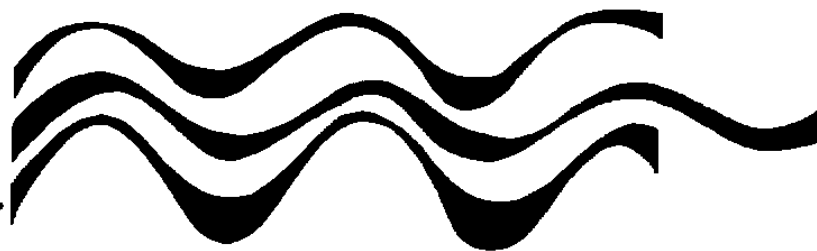


RSHM SOUNDINGS is a quarterly publication of the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary, Eastern and Western American and Northern European Provinces, and Zambezi Region. Waves sent out, reflected back, reveal an inner reality not always evident on the surface. Thus SOUNDINGS probes RSHM life in expanding 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.

r soundings

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Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary
English Speaking Provinces

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TO EVERYTHING A SEASON

by Ellen Marie Keane, RSHM

TARRYTOWN, NY Reading the book "Autumn Gospel" (Integration Books, Paulist Press 1995) was like meeting an old friend. Kathleen Fischer was an author I used frequently when I taught Philosophy at Marymount College, Tarrytown. A social worker, therapist, spiritual director, teacher, and by now author of 13 books, she had a great influence on my approach to the Feminist literature I taught my students.

In fact the definition of Feminism I used was from her book "Woman at the Well" (Paulist 1988) – "Feminism is a vision of life emphasizing inclusion rather than exclusion, connectedness rather than separateness and mutuality in relationships rather than dominance and submission. Feminism also entails the conviction that full individual development can take place only within a human community that is structured in Justice. And, so, Feminism works for social change."

This book both reinforces Fischer's understanding of feminism and takes the reader well beyond it into the second half of life, the autumn season: "We are asked to somehow

hold together the reality of suffering and loss with the truth of resurrection and new life. A woman described it in terms of the seasons. Her life felt like the autumn she was enjoying in nature in early October that year – 'The days are gorgeous and full of color,' she said, 'but I know that it will be cold at night and get dark earlier. It is a very good time but more lies behind than ahead. There is a poignancy and sadness along with the happiness.'" (p.2)

In the Bible the figure of Sophia or Wisdom personifies the gracious presence of God inviting each of us into relationships, the importance of which is accentuated as we age. Coupled with this, ironically, are the inevitable losses that accompany aging – losing close friends and family members to sickness and death, often having to relocate to an unfamiliar home, mounting dependence on others and fragility, along with countless other diminishment.

Many women in particular note the poignancy of the circle of life when, for example, a daughter finds herself caring for her parents who

cared for her earlier. Just as our ancestors have shaped us by the quality and courage of their lives we are called to do the same for those who will succeed us. As elders we often have time to listen to young people and mentor them. In the final chapter of "Autumn Gospel," Fischer tells a story about a child who sees God as a dark mystery, but says that if asked to draw a picture of God she would draw her Grandmother smiling, recalling the experience of her unconditional love.

I would like to conclude this reflection on a personal note. What I appreciate most about this book is the fact that Kathleen Fischer manages to be both encouraging and challenging. It is clear that she has listened to countless women over the years and her fidelity to the description of their actual experiences gives her counsel great authority. I can readily identify with her description of the positive and negative aspects of this "Autumn Gospel" while being assured that, with God's help, I can aspire to be my "best self" in the midst of it.♦

REFLECTIONS ON THE WORD SEASONS

by Carol Schommer, RSHM

CHINHOYI, ZIMBABWE Re-
flection on the word “SEASONS”
brought to mind other words such as
*Ritual / Predictability / Rhythm /
Repetition*. Memories of the seasons
of my childhood and adolescence
came flooding to mind:

Winter:

- Getting winter blankets and coats out of the mothballs
- The magic of walking in fresh snow on the way to midnight Mass at Christmas
- Sledding and snowpersons

Autumn:

- Raking leaves and jumping in them
- The first day of school
- Picking apples

Summer:

- Cookouts
- Walking barefoot on hot pavements
- Days at the beach

Spring:

- Yellow jonquils and multi-coloured tulips
- Spring cleaning
- New Easter outfits

The rituals of the seasons marked my years with familiar patterns. Unconsciously, I celebrated their rhythm, which gave me a feeling of security.

As a young adult I moved to Zimbabwe, and experienced a disruption in my understanding of **Seasons**. Now midnight Mass brought heavy rain and a church filled with “flying ants”. Gone were the cool, crisp October days of my youth. Now I experienced October days of intense heat as everyone and everything waited for the **Rainy Seasons**. Great rejoicing welcomed the first rains which signaled the arrival of the planting season.

Instead of enjoying a 4th of July cookout at the end of a summer day, I found myself grateful for the warmth of blankets to ward off the July evening chill. And the words

“spring” and “fall” disappeared from my conversation. In Zimbabwe they were not needed.

After 25 continuous years on the African continent my sense of seasonal rhythms is quite different from the **Seasons** of my youth, but just as real.

However, around the world the comfort that **Predictable/Familiar Seasons** bring is now being disrupted because of **Climate Change**. In Zimbabwe the rainy season is arriving later and bringing less rain. There is greater anxiety about what each year will mean in terms of planting and harvesting. And I think that anxiety about **Unpredictable Seasons** is experienced not only in Zimbabwe but around the world.

Perhaps the learning from these short reflections is to recognize that the experience of **Seasons** has been God’s gift to us; and to do everything we can to safeguard their continued predictability.♦



A TIME FOR EVERY PURPOSE...

by Sarah Gallagher



Sarah Gallagher wrote this letter to the Marymount London school community as she completed her tenure there to assume full-time leadership of Marymount International School in Rome. Her words give us a glimpse of the vibrant spirit of RSHM schools today.

23rd June, 2017

Dear Friends,

I drafted this last letter of my tenure as Headmistress here in Marymount with the beautiful pen gifted to me by the students. I shall treasure it as I do all the wonderful memories I have of them. The thoughtfulness of all your gifts and kind words over these last days have moved me more than I can say.

I have been blessed to serve in this school community for seven years. The biblical resonance and magical connotations of the cycle of seven perfectly captures my feelings about the special time I have enjoyed as part of this community. I have been enriched by the encounter it has afforded me, an encounter that has touched every aspect of my life. I should like to thank the Board of Governors and the Sisters of the RSHM for their guidance and support throughout my time in Marymount. I am grateful to the students and the parents who have so fully embraced the wonderful education the School has to offer.

My work here has included some most creative curriculum development, an apparently ceaseless stream of inspection and accredita-

(continued on page 6)

A NETWORK ENTERS A NEW SEASON

by Mary Jo Martin, RSHM

CARLISLE, ENGLAND I was appointed co-ordinator of the Global Network of RSHM Schools last year. My work, along with being on the boards of the four Marymount schools in Europe, entails various meetings and a considerable amount of travel—often to some rather lovely places! Until 2015 the Network had included the Marymount Schools plus schools from other provinces who wanted to join them. It was at the Enlarged General Council meeting in 2014 that agreement was reached to develop a global network that would involve all schools founded by the RSHM, to further their interest in accessing their heritage and the global dimension of education. My task was to begin the process of facilitating the development of this new network.

The Global Network of RSHM Schools, now in its second year, includes schools from almost all of our Provinces: the Eastern and Western American Provinces, Portugal, Brazil and the Zambezi Region, as well as schools from Colombia and Mexico that were originally founded by the RSHM. The coordinating committee, which has representatives from the various geographical areas, has written the Network's mission statement and terms of work. The inaugural conference was held in Bo-

gota, Colombia, and the following excerpt from Sr. Rosamond's address to participants gives a glimpse of the spiritual flavor of the conference:

I would like to share with you some foundational aspects of Fr. Gailhac's faith vision given to him by the Holy Spirit when a priest in Bézier. Gailhac's heart was totally open to receiving God's love for him personally. This depth of love for God always manifests itself in sharing that deep love for God with others. So his faith vision is simple—love of God and love of others.

Our Founder always spoke of the "glory of God" and for him the glory of God was, and still to this day remains, love of God; love of others.

As teachers you have that twofold love expressed in your dedication to the growth of your students. You are dedicated to educate the mind and heart. To use Mother Butler's words: "The aims of a Marymount (Sacred Heart of Mary) education are manifold: to educate the heart and mind and to provide for each student's total growth intellectually, spiritually, socially, and physically". And Fr. Gailhac has said, "In listening to your words, others will understand them only if you live what you teach."

Fr. Gailhac's spirituality is authentically expressed in a spirit of faith in Jesus Christ and zeal in service to others. Zeal that can be labeled as a flame, a fire, a passion in
(continued on page 4)



Members of the Coordinating Committee: Andrea Forzoni (Italy), Guilherme Andrade (Brazil), Susan Kumnick (Colombia), Sarah Gallagher (England and Italy), Margarida Marrucho (Portugal), Sr. Mary Jo Martin (England), Concepcion Alvar (United States), and Sr. Philippa O'Sullivan (General Council),

MAGI

by Dan Berrigan

They set out in bright approving summer
Flags, gold, imagination attending
Down charted roads, the star like a sun of night
And at earth's end, the unique King awaiting.

Autumn too was lovely and novel: weather temperate
And the star mellowing slowly as a moon.
Then winter on them: the light snuffed out:
Hearsay, frontiers, men inimical to dreamers—
and what direction in iron snow? —a hind's track
diminished in ivory, a white birch stricken to ground
and the sky tolling its grey dispassionate bell
upon age, upon infinite heart's weariness.

So the great came, great only in need
To the roof of thatch, the child at knee awaiting.

A SUMMER SOJURN INTO RSHM HISTORY AND SPIRIT

by Mary Beth Moore, SC

HAMPTON BAYS, NY Twelve pilgrims—nine from Marymount University in Arlington, VA; one staff from the Tarrytown, NY RSHM Provincial Center, one nurse from the RSHM Infirmary in Tarrytown and one from Centro Corazón de Maria in Hampton Bays, NY met in the founding city of the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary, Béziers France, from July 15-19, 2017. There our journey truly began—into the spirit and history of the congregation.

Though diverse in our professional roles, we were united by our collaboration with the RSHM, who sponsor the institutions we work for. The sisters are convinced that the continued fruitfulness of the vision depends upon the large family of collaborators knowing the "charism" of founders Father Jean Gailhac and Apollonie Cure [Mother St. Jean]. Hence the journey to Béziers where these founders spent their lives. The founders simply saw the needs before them in 19th century France and responded with "faith and zeal." Thanks to the warm hospitality and deep knowledge of RSHM Sisters Thérèse-Marie Potelle and Bernadette McNamara, we were able to recognize and deepen that spirit, one that animates our own work in our time.

Thérèse-Marie and Bernadette explained the word "Charism." It is the particular gift of the Holy Spirit given to each community of religious



through the vision of their founder. All Christians are called to live the gospel; a charism gives shape to a particular way of doing so. We pilgrims got a taste of the development of charism through the words of the RSHM leadership through the years. Several expressed their joy at discovering that their daily work has been nourished by the vision of Pere Gailhac and Mere St. Jean. Now they can build upon the vision more intentionally.

We worked hard. Still, we managed to find time to enjoy delicious French meals, shared at outdoor tables in the perfect climate of southern France. The piece d' resistance was a banquet at a nearby vineyard, part of the program. The

exquisite fare—six courses no less—attested to the excellence of French cuisine.

Perhaps it is providential that the Sunday gospel we heard was the parable of the sower and the seed. We trust we will be "good ground" producing thirty, sixty, a hundredfold in time. Thanks to all the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary who made our pilgrimage possible.

Sister Mary Beth Moore, SC
(Centro Corazón de Maria)
Barbara Edward
(Marymount Convent)
Shirley Ann Solivan
(EAP Provincial Center)

NEXT ISSUE:
BEAUTY

NETWORK cont. from pg.3

servicing others. Zeal is dynamic and promotes life in others. Through love, the flame is ignited and burns with enthusiasm for all that gives life. The source of this flame, this fire is in our encounter with Jesus Christ.

Dynamic promotion of life and mission were deeply experienced at this inaugural conference. Further

news of the Network can be found on the website at <http://www.globalnetworkofrshmschools.org>. Conferences are held every two years and meetings of head teachers at various times. The Global Network is a tremendously rich resource for our schools and I am delighted to have been invited by the General Council to coordinate this work. ♦

SEASONS OF THE HEART

by Margaret Scurry, RSHM

Looking back to another day
when Religious Life was in its heyday.
Entering the RSHM's in my youth
too young they said but seeking truth.
Novitiate days called for perseverance and courage
even for the stouthearted
those days were a challenge.
Growth in spirituality was the aim,
never seeking glory or fame.
Life long lessons were learned in many ways
strengthening the will for future days.
Profession came and one was sent
to teach in RSHM schools one obediently went.
Interacting with students on a daily basis,
made this special ministry a real vocation.
Living in community for many was new
companionship and camaraderie saw them through.
In later years new ministries were open
for those willing to risk and hoping
to be of service to those at the bottom,
especially to the marginalized and the forgotten.
Advanced age and infirmity brings diminishment
then a ministry of prayer and support brings fulfillment.
When death comes knocking at the door
one may ask, "Could I have done more"?
But a loving God has a welcome for all
who labored with love for the great and the small.
Living as an RSHM is a life fulfilling,
rewarding those in their daily giving.
To Père Gailhac and Mère St Jean our founders
our gratitude is forever boundless.



Sr. Margaret tutoring a student at Cantwell Sacred Heart of Mary High School.

APRIL REVISITED

by Annette Cunningham

NEW YORK, NY To quote T.S. Eliot in *The Wasteland*,

*"April is the cruellest month, breeding
Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing
Memory and desire, stirring
Dull roots with spring rain."*

But April is not "the cruellest month." There, I said it...I think T.S. Eliot's indictment of April in the opening of *The Wasteland* is that it forces us to take a fresh look at all the things we expected to have predictable endings, but which didn't. It sounds a bit like an indictment of surprises.

Cruel? I don't think so. Only for those who bet on nothing changing; on no one from your past re-emerging as a richly progressed version of him or herself; on a flock that has lost a shepherd, not just pulling itself together, but setting off on brave new paths, together in their diversity.



So it was on April 8 when I joined in the blessing of the Daniel Berrigan Center for Art & Activism at Benincasa. As one of scores of guests of the Benincasa Community on Manhattan's West 70th Street, I heard voices from around our country and the globe turn the Tower of Babel story into a lie. People of wildly different talents shared common memories and dreams for the future. And there emerged the promise that the friends of the recently deceased 94-year old veteran of the peace movement had come together to demonstrate the truth of his one-word answer to the question of how peace can be brought to life. "Community." (continued on page 6)

APRIL REVISITED cont. from pg. 5

Coming early in the month, Easter provided the perfect "looking glass" through which to view the much more ordinary but no less lovely experiences that force us to redefine both success and failure. To delight in the unexpected happenings that give day to day life its rich texture. And as with the Easter story, it can often be triggered by the speaking of a name.

Bolstered by a number of April's happenings, a certainty is growing in me that there are no coincidences in life. I hope you will agree that anything but cruel April 2017 proves my point. Join me in the wish, that should the dead earth surprise us by breeding lilacs, bring them on!♦

A TIME cont. from pg. 2

tion visits, building and refurbishment projects in every area of the School, innovations in pedagogy and classroom praxis, higher performance levels in the IB examinations, and a steady stream of superb university offers. The list is long and would be tedious for you to read in full. These creative and challenging changes were the work of tremendous staff collaboration. I have been privileged to be part of this work and I am so grateful to my colleagues: I have enjoyed the spirit, humour, intellectual curiosity and unparalleled professionalism of our wonderful faculty and staff. I shall miss them more than they know!

I wish Mrs Frazier every joy of

this wonderful Marymount school. I am sure she will relish the opportunity to lead it onto even greater heights. I look forward to working with her and to hearing news of you as I move to our sister school in Marymount Rome.

With my gratitude and love
Sarah Gallagher
Headmistress

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- Annette Cunningham is now a full time writer, having retired from directing a marketing communications firm.
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- Mary Beth Moore, SC, co-directs the Centro Corazón de Maria in Hampton Bays, NY.
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r soundings



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