

HEARING FROM SOUNDINGS READERS

EARS OF THE HEART

By Celine Bitega, RSHM,

Dear Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary,

I should drop you a note now and then, to say how much Soundings means to me. I have quotes from past issues posted around my apartment here at St. Andrew's Village, such as the following by Elizabeth Kolb, RSHM:

DO THIS IN MEMORY OF ME

When we do this in memory of Jesus, we make him present. When We remember those whom we love Who are no longer with us, we make Them present, but in a different way. How important it is to remember, How important it is to be grateful... And Eucharist is about remembering And being grateful.

My daughter and I have fun comparing our days at Marymount. In the late 40's, Rita Arthur was my classmate. We kept in touch all through the years until her passing. My daughter Nancy remembers Sr. Elizabeth McAlister in 1970-71 at the College. It was good to see Liz's "Transitions in Peacemaking."

Here in Denver, the priests celebrated a Mass on Father Berrigan's passing. Father Tom McCormack brought me a pin with Father Berrigan's picture on it. He thought I could relate to it.

Thank you,
Shirley Marshall Gillam
MST'48

This handwritten letter had a postscript:

P.S. Handwriting to this day, courtesy of the RSHM

When I entered 57 Park Terrace West in 1944 I was living in Kingsbridge, St. John's Parish. My friend Laura and I walked down to school and home again every day to save the \$.05 fare. My cousin Pat Clarkin had graduated in June and I felt very fortunate to take her place. She told me about her favorite, Mother Pauline, and I fell in love instantly too! I have so many happy stories about her, but my favorite is the one I live every day:

My husband Dick has a PhD in English Lit from Fordham but, although he writes beautiful poetry he remembers none of the poems I memorized in Mother Pauline's class. So when I tease him with *My heart leaps up when I behold a rainbow in the sky*, or *Does God demand day labor, light denied?* and can keep on going, he pretends anger. But secretly he knows that my love of poetry has brought us closer as I read what he writes for and to me.

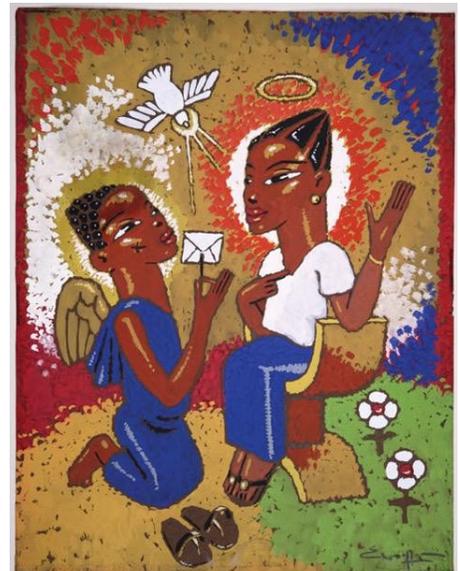
In the spring of 1946 my aunt died, leaving us a house in Flushing, and so we moved. It broke my heart to leave my friends and family in the Bronx, so my parents allowed me to commute. Work had begun on the new school at Park Terrace, so there were two shifts. When I left Flushing on winter mornings the moon and stars were still shining and my parents were still asleep. Money was a problem in those days. but a good education counted above all. How lucky I was to have the 'Madames'!

Margaret Gerety Andres
SHMPT'48

CHIVUNA, ZAMBIA What came to my memory when reflecting on *listening with the ears of the heart* is my experience of visiting an elderly lady, Dona Jovelita, during my novitiate. She was almost completely blind and lived alone. I visited her usually on Sundays. At that time my spoken Portuguese was not so good. However, she was well aware of this and tolerated me. I was in a situation where I did not understand everything she shared with me but I was always there to give her an attentive and listening ear. Sometimes even without words I could let her know that I felt the pain that she was going through within herself.

What does it mean then to listen with the ears of the heart? Many times we hear things around us but we may not be listening. Listening with the ears of the heart is not merely hearing words; it is being reflective on the words. We hear just as Mary our mother pondered the words from the angel Gabriel at the Annunciation. This implies finding a place of feeling and of meaning in the depth of our innermost being.

(continued on page 6)



Be it done unto me according to Your Word.

NEXT ISSUE:
KINDNESS

HAVE YOU HEARD?

By Mary Leah Plante, RSHM

LOS ANGELES, CA The soft wind calling one out to a freeing experience is so compelling; receding ocean waves inviting one to go out a little farther can be very persuading. Have you found yourself enticed by the clear blue sky's promise of calming, soothing moments if you would just go out and sit awhile?

What if our willingness to listen to and be immersed in nature is similar to the cocoon stage in the transformation from caterpillar to butterfly. The time we choose to spend reflecting and getting a personal understanding of experiences to determine what is positive, negative, or to be dismissed. A time where we can once again say to ourselves, "If I feel this way...others may too." Empathy is experienced; acts of compassion follow. The butterfly emerges.

Listening for and responding to the calls of nature prepare us to look



beyond the obvious to discover the unexpressed. Being patiently observant and effective responders in

our fast-paced Humpty-Dumpty world may be the glue we need to keep it all together. ♦

A REMEMBRANCE

by Anne O'Brien Tedesco

When the Keane family and the RSHM (including the Soundings staff) suffered a great loss in the sudden death of Ellen Marie Keane, RSHM on August 5, 2018, many beautiful tributes were spoken. Copies of the planned eulogies are available on request from We include here a brief reflection given spontaneously at the vigil service by Ellie's lifetime friend, Anne O'Brien Tedesco. (formerly M. Daniel, RSHM).

I could tell you about...

Ellie in 1949, when she and Margaret Ellen and I began high school 69 years ago, but I won't...

Ellie on the Basketball Varsity, where she was a leader, of course, but I won't...

Our being given our first drinks (Pink Ladies they were) by her mother, that mother of all humor, before

our first dance—but I won't...

Ellie as a colleague in community, and in teaching at Marymount College—where she, the philosopher, was one of the best teachers anyone ever had,

Her sharing English and laughter with local Russian friends,

Ellie's coming, at her request, to visit my sister Mary in a nursing home, less than three months ago,

Being with Ellie as she gently asked for water a week ago today.

But what I really want to say is that Ellie has been, through all this time, and in the best sense, a rock: steady, supportive, always there. Since 1949, I never heard her say an unkind word. Ellie was a warm light. I believe she was this, not only for me, but for you, for us all, for everyone here—for her family, for her reli-

gious community, for former students, for immigrants in Tarrytown, for prisoners in Bedford, for many who cannot be here, for all sorts.

Ellie was a person who understood and loved and welcomed all: Ellie, the Saint of and for All Sorts. ♦



Anne O'Brien and Ellie (Sr. Ellen Marie Keane)

SERVING AS A TRANSLATOR

by Maria do Rosário Durães, rscm

ROME, ITALY There is no perfect translation...

Language, one of the many ways of the human expression, is a complex structure that involves multiple aspects—grammar, punctuation, idiomatic expressions, intonations, nuances. Through words we convey not only concepts, ideas, thoughts, but also feelings and emotions. We all know the impact that words can generate in us and around us, we experience how they resonate in us, how they echo within us, either in a positive or negative way. And we are also aware of the difficulty, sometimes, of making ourselves understood even in our own language...

So, what does it mean to be an interpreter? to serve as a translator? How can we interpret accurately what we are hearing or reading? How to know what it really means? How to find the appropriate terms to express it? How to communicate the message in a way that makes sense to whomever relies on our words? A tremendous challenge...

We, translators, are merely channels, trying the best we can to link, to bridge, to connect and to communicate to the listeners or readers the message we receive in the most accurate way. And we have to adapt our ears to different voices, tonalities, accents, learning through our mistakes, even sometimes allowing us some good laughs. For sure, we want our word to be true and meaningful but we have to recognize that our word is not the only one, is not unique...

Also, we have to be aware that translators, being the first to listen to or to read a text, have to process it within themselves, in order to understand, to grasp its meaning, and finally to make choices of the terms, hopefully the right ones. And what a struggle when it comes to words that only make sense in our own language, e.g., 'Saudade' or poetry. As an Italian proverb says 'a translator is a traitor'...



Srs. Edith Hart and Maria do Rosário Durães

Serving as a translator throughout the years in an international Institute, I am deeply grateful for the many opportunities offered to me to participate in several provincial and regional events, various meetings for RSHM or collaborators, living new experiences, connecting with sisters and people of different cultures, mentalities, opinions. So, this ministry has helped me to grow, to enlarge my horizons, to expand my own views. Certainly it has given me a broader perspective of the Institute, to relate and to integrate differences, and the grace to weave new friendships. A blessing...

Reflecting and pondering on words and the art of translation, several images come to my mind—a reflection in water, the back of a tapestry, the image in a mirror, the echo of the song of a bird...

Also John the Baptist, the icon of the prophet, the Lord's herald, was called to convey God's message. And we are aware how much he struggled in translating it to his own people. We too, as translators, are called to communicate the message, being faithful to the meaning of the words and interpreting them correctly. An enormous responsibility...

There is no perfect translator... Only Jesus, the WORD made flesh, translates in its fullness the message that God wants to communicate with us. Love...

Obrigada!♦

HEAR YE! HEAR YE!

By Denis Murnane

MOUNT KISCO, NY Few things are more important than being fully able to hear the sounds you cherish. For the past 32 years I've had the joy of improving the lives of the hearing impaired, one patient at a time. It's deeply gratifying to help people enjoy the sounds, voices, people, and conversations in their lives.

While aging is only one among many factors, 40 to 50% of people 75 and older experience hearing loss. One of the great gifts of my profession has been working with older people who suffer diminishment in hearing, but whose wit and wisdom are spectacular. My grandfather, Patrick McMahon, was in this category, and also several RSHM and Extended Family with whom I have had the privilege of working over the years. As teachers, the Sisters know that they not only give in the classroom—they also receive. It's the same with an audiologist. While helping patients to hear better, one also grows in ability to hear—goodness, courage, graciousness, humor—the sounds of fullness of life.

A favorite quote of mine is, "We have two ears and only one mouth so that we can listen twice as much as we speak."

As the hearing aid specialist appeared in the outer office, I thought, "That surely is an Irish face." As we talked he told me he had an aunt who is an RSHM—none other than Bea McMahon. Going to check on my hearing aids in the past was hardly memorable. Now each visit is a cheerful encounter and great service.

Clare McBrien, RSHM

As I sat waiting for a friend, a voice said, "I'm told you have a hearing problem. I would like to help you if I can, but no promises." It was the voice of Denis Murnane, a man on a mission to help people like me. With his time, talent and generosity, my hearing has come a long way. Who ever thought it would be such a delight to be able to hear cars whizzing by on the highway? Thank you, Denis!

Genevieve Murphy, RSHM

LISTENING, COUNSELING, CONSOLING

An excerpt from the Sag Harbor Express, May 31, 2018

SAG HARBOR, NY Fighting Chance held its very first board meeting years ago around a big wooden table overlooking the bay at the Cormaria Retreat House where Sr. Ann Marino led a conversation that would set the tone for the Sag Harbor-based organization's next 16 years.

Sister Ann, who has been with Cormaria 35 years, said she is a cancer survivor herself, having overcome bladder cancer in 1974. She said it was an experience that led her closer to God, and one that gave her the ability to understand the particular difficulties and needs experienced by those undergoing cancer treatment.

"I learned a lot from that," she said this week. "I never wanted to say that I had cancer. I was supposed to be the strong nun, and all of a sudden I became human. Through that, I became compassionate and traveled with many people through their journeys with cancer."

For her contributions supporting Fighting Chance and the people who come to it for help, the organization



Sr. Ann Thaddeus Marino

honored Sr. Ann this year with its medal of honor. It's given to someone who has made an extraordinary contribution improving the quality of care for cancer patients on the East End.

Duncan Darrow, founder of Fighting Chance, said, "There is a hunger among people on the cancer journey to explore whether there is a higher being, whether there is a

heaven. Some wonder about spirituality that they can grab onto that might ease the anxiety and fear of the journey. What I think is so terrific about Sister Ann is that she is a wonderful listener. She offers a very gentle, user-friendly way of discussing spirituality. She's not banging the drum for Catholicism or any particular religion. What she seems to do so effectively is sort of tease out of an individual whether they've got a little spirituality in them. And almost everyone does. She helps nurture and grow that so it becomes one of the pillars you can lean on as you go through the ups and downs of the cancer journey."

"Her Wednesday prayer/meditation groups offer a spiritual context for solace, contemplation and growth," said Karrie Robinson, who recently retired as Fighting Chance's director of clinical services and programs. "Sister Ann truly represents the finest counselor/consoler we have, and stands out as a paradigm of goodness, particularly in this day and age."♦

SPEAKING AND LISTENING

Pax Christi

NEW YORK, NY On June 3, 2018, Pax Christi New York presented the Sr. Christine Mulready Award to people who seek to transform metropolitan New York into a community of peacemakers and justice-seekers. Among the seven individuals honored were Srs. Kathleen Kanet and Virginia Dorgan, RSHM for their long years of peace and justice work, culminating in the founding of the Network for Peace through Dialogue. This grassroots organization whose history and records are now available in the Schlesinger Library

of Harvard University exemplified the importance of dialogue in peacemaking. In accepting the award, Kathleen and Jinny distributed the following list of Dialogue Practices which have animated their gatherings and have also been promoted at Eastern American Province assemblies:

DIALOGUE PRACTICES

Listen for understanding – listen with equal respect to each person present.

Speak from your heart as well as

your mind – speak only when you are sincerely moved to make an honest contribution from your own experience.

Suspend judgment – let go of any need to be right or have a right answer; try to suspend certainty.

Hold space for differences – embrace all points of view; change "but" to "and."

Remain open to all outcomes.

Slow down – let there be spaces, silence in the dialogue.♦

Silence, both exterior and interior, is an important tool for listening with the ears of our hearts. It enables us to get in touch with the reality around us and find meaning in everything we encounter.

Listening in this way helps us to be more aware of what is around us and to draw meaning from it. It gives us a keen sense of what a person is NOT saying—that there is more to what one may be sharing but is not able to express. Words may be too limited to adequately express thoughts and feelings. I found this especially true with my friend, Dona Jovelita. Listening with the ears of the heart enables us to give the per-

son speaking to us a part of ourselves in return. We give our full attention, support and heart. It gives the person speaking a sense of being accepted, understood and cared for.

God is continually inviting us to listen with the ears of our hearts as we go about our activities. Firstly, we need to listen to God and then to those with whom we live and whom we serve, especially those who are broken. Jesus listening to the woman caught in adultery is a clear example of listening with one's heart. "Woman! has anyone condemned you? No... Go and sin no more. It is a listening that gives hope and liberation, changing a per-

son's world view and bestowing a great, glorious joy.

Listening with the ears of our hearts makes a huge difference in other people's lives. Many strange things are happening in our world today. People tend to make decisions and choices that are difficult to comprehend simply because they have no one to really listen to them. If we stopped talking so much and listened more, many souls would be relieved of the burdens in their lives. The world would become a better place for all of us. ♦

CONTRIBUTORS

- Margaret Gerety Andres, SHM Park Terrace '48
- Celine Bitega, RSHM, young professed Sister ministering at the Chivuna Clinic in Zambia
- Maria do Rosário Durães, RSHM Generalate Staff in Rome
- Shirley Marshall Gilliam, Marymount School, Tarrytown, '48
- Denis Murnane, Community Hearing Services, Mount Kisco, NY
- Anne O'Brien, past member of the Board of Directors of the American Chemical Society, retired in Tarrytown, NY.
- Pax Christi, NY
- Mary Leah Plante, RSHM, archivist for the Western American Province, Los Angeles, CA
- Sag Harbor Express, Long Island, NY
- Catherine Vincie, RSHM, Eastern American Provincial Councillor, Tarrytown, NY



EDITORS: Cecilia Brizuela
Irene Cody, RSHM
Bea McMahon, RSHM
Pierre Dullaghan, RSHM
Margaret Treacy, RSHM
Monica Walsh, RSHM
Clevie Youngblood, RSHM
Mary Alice Young, RSHM

ART EDITOR: Edith Hart, RSHM
LAYOUT: Bianca Haglich, RSHM

www.rshm.org; www.rshm-nep.org;
www.rscm-rshm.org
province@rshmeap.org

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Tarrytown, New York 10591
50 Wilson Park Drive
Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary



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