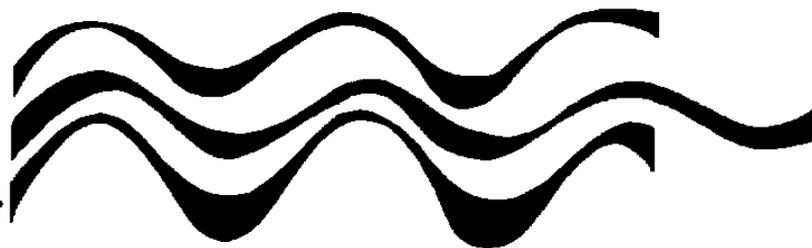


RSHM SOUNDINGS is a quarterly publication of the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary, Eastern and Western American and Northern European Provinces, and Zambezi Region. Waves sent out, reflected back, reveal an inner reality not always evident on the surface. Thus SOUNDINGS probes RSHM life in expanding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

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Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary
English Speaking Provinces

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AHA! MOMENTS

by Margaret Frazier, Headmistress Marymount London

LONDON At Marymount London, we are fortunate to experience many moments of grace. "Aha!" moments, realizations, quiet and loud proclamations help us to celebrate the growth of our students and their understanding of the goals and charism of the RSHM. I share excerpts with you from a Wednesday Assembly presentation by Abena Saka, a Grade 12 Boarding Student from Ghana:



During my vacation, the book Becoming by Michelle Obama drew me towards the former first lady of America as I found myself relating to her journey as a young woman. As a high school student, she was told dismissively that she was not 'Princeton material', a phrase that is able to stop the dreams of a young person immediately. The idea that you are not good enough to reach a certain goal haunted her psyche. However, Michelle Robinson refused to let her race, failures, or social class define who she could become and where she could end up. She was determined to show people that she could get into Princeton and do wonders there. She did end up accomplishing her dream, proving to herself that she had the brains, the talents, and the ability to conquer the world.

Life forces all sorts of changes upon us and most often we are not ready for them. Grade 12 students are about to face one of the greatest changes of all: independence on a whole new different level. It is important to understand that just because we wish for a certain career does not mean that there cannot be a sudden shift in our way of thinking. You may find that you want to advocate for education, human rights, you want to become a chef or a teacher. And that is okay too. I want you to know that you will become who you are destined to be with time. Everything takes time, creating a new habit takes time, finding the right study technique takes time and changing a negative behavior takes time.

I would like to advise you to

take advantage of your Community Action Service experiences. They do really help put into perspective what kind of contribution you can bring to the real world. Be it through sport, choir, drama, or environmental activities. I realized through CAS that I am more of a service person. I love the feeling of fulfilment that comes with helping the less fortunate and hope that in whatever future career I choose there is a space particularly dedicated to that. Marymount has used its goals to guide us students to become the best individuals that we can be in society. By the time we graduate, we have become more than when we first arrived because we have gained experiences that can balance us and remind us of our worth.

I have every hope and confidence that Abena and so many other students in our Marymount schools will go forth and change the world. They are imbued with far more than a strong academic foundation; they are apostles learning and living in a world that needs their intelligence, love, compassion, and willingness to serve others. And for that we are proud! "Aha!" moments are ones to be cultivated and treasured for they are at the heart of true living and learning.♦

SO THIS IS WHAT YOU WANT ME TO DO

by Genevieve Murphy, RSHM

TARRYTOWN, NY There was no special moment in my life where I can remember saying, "Aha! so this is what you want me to do, God" Actually, when I was very young, my mind was made up that I would not be a nun. I feel as if I must have had St. Peter by the hand going out the Appian Way, until Jesus beckoned us to turn around! It is my belief that a vocation grows and develops all through life nurtured by prayer, fun, laughter, study, and dedication to high ideals.

In childhood, prayer was presented mostly as serious and solemn. However, there were times when prayer became barrels of fun. When the day's work was done and the family knelt at chairs with our backs to the fire to pray the Rosary, my brother and I knelt next to each other as our rosary beads dangled through the spokes of the chair. This caught the attention of the cat. She proceeded to strike the beads with her paw until we could no longer control our delight with peals of laughter. Needless to say, Dad wasn't pleased or amused!.

Laughter is a gift and a necessary component of life. We can laugh when we are at peace with God, ourselves and others. The first thing the angel said to Mary was, "peace." The angels sang "peace" to the shepherds, and the first thing Jesus said to the apostles after his resurrection was "peace." Where there is no peace, there is no laughter, I mean real honest-to-goodness, laughter! This attitude makes prayer part of life, not something extra. When the Angelus bell rang, conversation stopped, the Angelus was prayed, and the broken sentence was continued as if without interruption.

After two years of training as postulant and novice at St. Joseph's Novitiate, in Tarrytown, NY, I looked forward to beginning my mission in the Lord's vineyard. It began at St. Catharine of Alexandria School in Brookly, NY. There were twenty-



Kathleen, Genevieve, and Brigid Murphy, RSHM

two of us Sisters, mostly very young, ready and willing, "to know God and make God known, to love God and make God loved, and to proclaim that Jesus Christ has come that all may have life." (RSHM Mission Statement.) We taught, studied, prayed, sang, played pranks on one another, laughed and cried. The generous, joyful and unending support of community carried us through those long days of teaching, studying, communal prayer, manual work, and very little rest. We had the love and support of parents and grandparents who entrusted us with their children, and the dedicated priests of the parish who worked tirelessly, to build the Church. I also had the example of my older sister, Brigid, who had already preceded me and had become a gifted teacher at St. Mary's School in Long Island City, NY. My younger sister, Kathleen, would follow later and become a great missionary. Each of us has followed where we were called to serve and we have done so joyfully for fifty-six, sixty and seventy years. Taking a look back at all those years, our hearts were filled with a great desire to do what God put us on this earth to do: to love him and draw others to him.

May we continue sowing the seed with joy in our hearts, determination in our step, kindness on our lips and Christ on our countenance.♦

RSHM LIFE AND THE CHURCH IN CRISIS

by Catherine Vincie, RSHM

TARRYTOWN, NY As religious women, as RSHM, we have a unique relationship with the Church. Our Constitutions tell us that "Our religious consecration draws us at the deepest level of our being into the dynamism and holiness of the Church" (Const. 10). Yet these are difficult times to be so tied to the "dynamism and holiness" of the Church. We are almost paralyzed by the pain, anger, confusion and concern that have resulted from the sexual abuse crisis, the cover-up of the scandals, and the near total collapse of moral authority of the Church in our culture. We are sometimes caught up on the receiving end of this tragic behavior, and we regretfully may also be responsible for the same kinds of sinful behavior ourselves either individually or as communities. We long to identify the sin as being all "out there," but the painful truth is that there is also sin "in here" as well.

We need to probe a little deeper into what we mean by being drawn into the dynamism and holiness of the Church at the deepest level of our being. At the heart of this issue is the primary call we have received from Divine Mystery to be drawn into the very holiness of God. This gives us a tremendous sense of hope and trust that we (and our Church) can grow and be transformed in grace beyond our frailty and sin. We live in the hope of the incoming reign of God that is already and yet awaits full completion.

We have a long tradition of belief that the Church is one, **holy**, catholic and apostolic, and that is at once divine and human. By being divine, the Church participates in the holiness of God; it is the Body of Christ; it is the reign of God already present. Yet we have never professed to be wholly divine; we have always maintained that the Church is incarnated in the world as a fully

(continued on page 3)

NEW LIFE: WELCOMED, CELEBRATED, SHARED

by Susannah Bourbeau Alao, MC 2007

OSSINING, NY I never really knew how much joy a new life could bring. Akira Olubunmi Alao was born on November 7, 2018. I have never experienced so much pain and exhaustion and yet have never been overwhelmed by such overflowing love.

During my pregnancy, the sisters shared so much love and concern for me, asking me every day how I was feeling; was I getting enough rest? Was I sleeping ok? Did I have everything I needed to provide for my child? The sisters offered their beds for me to rest and I was encouraged to sit down and put my feet up. (I was fortunate that my pregnancy was smooth for nine months and I didn't experience the sickness and exhaustion other women face.)

It occurred to me that the sisters were ministering to me, praying for me, extending their love and support and living out their mission that all



Susannah and Ade Alao with their daughter Akira Ollubunmi

may have life and have it to the full. I felt such "life" through the sisters in celebration of this new life. We gathered for baby showers and parties where the sisters gave suggestions of baby names.

I felt exceptionally joyful when I returned to the Convent after my maternity leave to introduce my daughter and I felt the sisters knew her and she knew them. There was such a calm in my daughter as I brought her around to meet each of the sisters at table in the Dining

Room. My daughter's eyes were opened wide and as the sisters smiled at my daughter, she smiled back. There was a connection. She felt love. Such a mutual love was shared; it was so obvious God's love filled the room. I didn't know it was possible that a being could be so cared for even before she entered the world.

As a mother I expected to fall in love with my child and I did as soon as she was placed in my arms, but what continues to delight me is the sheer love and joy the sisters have for my daughter as if they have all birthed her. I can't help but smile when I think of their delight in her. I am so blessed by the way the sisters continue to minister to me through prayer and support. I am eager to see the relationship that develops between my daughter and the sisters and witness Christ's love.♦

REFLECTION cont. from pg.2

human institution as well. Our distinction from Christ incarnate is that he was without sin; we, unfortunately, are subject to the sin of all things human.

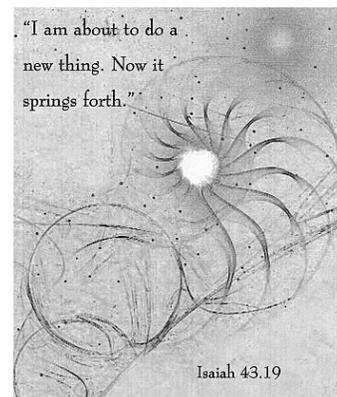
Yet we believe with St. Paul that where sin abounds, grace abounds more fully. The ecclesial situation appears quite bleak at the moment, but divine creativity is not stymied by our individual or collective sin. Life and resurrection can emerge out of death and seeming hopelessness. Perhaps the fruit of this difficult time will be a radical restructuring of the Church. Perhaps the emergence of lay leadership will be the suitable antidote for a clerical culture that has allowed the sex abuse crisis and coverup to occur. Perhaps our challenge as religious women lies at this moment of pain and confusion, and calls us to respond in ways never

before imagined.

Paragraph 10 of our Constitutions goes further than merely identifying us with the Church. It reads, "Our lives, unconditionally given for the building up of the Body of Christ, are a prophetic proclamation of the Good News and manifestation of the coming of the Kingdom." This is key to the role of religious women at this time of crisis. But where do we go to find our voice and build a new future?

I believe the religious experience we have of the living God that is at the heart of our lives is the place where we must go again and again to find our prophetic voice, to reclaim the Gospel message of life that is at once our gift and our task. It is, however, not enough just to tap into this wellspring of grace, we must take seriously that the present calls us

into a future that is genuinely new. The traditional ways that Religious women have lived their charism in the Church and world were of their time and place. Today, this month, this year, we are called to envision new ways of enfleshing the gospel and living discipleship in an era of ecclesial crisis.♦



A MOMENT OF RECOGNITION

by Sarah Gallagher, Headmistress Marymount Rome

ROME, ITALY The November 2018 meeting of the Mediterranean Association of International Schools in Dubai, was the occasion of the Sr. Anne Marie Hill Award. This award was created to recognize and honor those MAIS administrators and teachers who, in the spirit of Sr Anne Marie, have been active in organizing, supporting, and promoting service in areas related to peace, justice and human rights. When introduced by Sarah Gallagher, Headmistress of Marymount International School, Rome, Sr. Anne Marie received a standing ovation from the 400 educators in the room. The heartwarming introduction is excerpted as follows:

While still a teenager Anne Marie Hill took the decision to consecrate her life to the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary, an order

founded in France in the mid 19th century. The original work of the founders of this order was to take in local women who had fallen into prostitution, care for them and educate their children to protect them from the marginalized existence that poverty and want had condemned them to.

Sr Anne Marie has for 60 years dedicated herself to the world of education - first as a teacher in USA, Zimbabwe and then as a Head of School in London, Paris and Rome. Her selfless dedication throughout these years is legendary among those who worked with her or attended her schools either as students or as parents. Her brilliance as an administrator is still felt in all the institutions she worked in - in the facilities, the people, the programs and most importantly in the model she left for us to follow.

When Sr Anne Marie emerged as an educational leader, words like *internationalism*, *global citizenship*, and *visionary educators* were not in the common parlance. She matured as an educator at a time when the spirit of Vatican II encouraged a vision of deeper engagement between the religious and the secular world. We should not underestimate the courage that the move to greater inclusivity of the laity in religious schools required; it marked a tremendous shift in practice in a world where change was more likely to connote radical resistance than optimistic embrace. There were no blueprints to follow, just a direction which broke with almost two thousand years of tradition. Sr Anne Marie led the way in this work. She was instrumental in partnering with lay leadership as a founding member of the London International Schools
(continued on page 6)

REMEMBERING MY MOTHER

by Mary Lungu RSHM

CHIVUNA, ZAMBIA On completion of my novitiate in Brazil I was happy to be missioned to Chivuna. Before settling in I travelled home to Choma for my holiday and everyone in my family gave me a great welcome. It was lovely to hear all their stories of the two years I was away. After all the joy, celebration and laughter with my parents and siblings my holiday came to an end and I travelled to Chivuna in March 2017 to begin my ministry there.

Then in April 2018, I received a phone call from home with the news that my mother was critically ill. The next day I travelled from Chivuna to Choma to see her and when I arrived it seemed as if somehow she was waiting for me. I stayed with her for some 2-3 hours praying before she finally parted to the Lord. It was my first encounter with death. When I came out of the mortuary I experi-

enced a sense of peace, a sense of new thankfulness and letting go. I felt the prayers of my RSHM sisters helping me appreciate life in a far deeper way.

May the soul of my mother, Christina Banda Lungu, rest in peace.♦



NEXT ISSUE:
IMAGINATION



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MOMENTS, YEARS, DECADES OF A LIFETIME

by Marie Ignatius Clune, RSHM

1954-1958: Marymount College in Westwood, California

As Marymount College students in the 50's, we respected and loved the RSHM. They respected and loved us unconditionally. We appreciated the Sisters as Catholic educators, their personal guidance, impressive educational competencies and scholarship, their living faith, kindness, friendship and genuine personal concern for each of us. To this day, as alumnae, we continue to treasure our sincere friendships which were initiated on our first day as Freshmen attending Marymount College, Westwood, in Los Angeles. This reality is an Aha! memory for me and my peers today.

1960-2018: Aha! Years

I am very grateful to God and to my Community of the RSHM for the gift of being called to Consecrated Life in the Church. I love the spirit of our Community which is first and foremost "to make God known and loved." With a heart full of gratitude to God and to the Sisters who inspired me, I give thanks for having been involved as a Catholic educator in elementary, secondary and university levels for fifty years and more. It has been such a joy to be a teacher, counselor, mentor, principal of two elementary schools in the Archdiocese of San Francisco, and friend of so many families and students at all levels in education.

For almost thirty- five years I enjoyed and loved teaching, mentoring, initiating leadership programs with dedicated faculty members and friends at the University of San Francisco and networking with service and justice organizations in San Francisco, including the Archdiocese of San Francisco. These years brought fabulous spiritual and educational blessings and challenges.



Western American Province Sisters 1969

"That all may have life" is our RSHM imperative from our Founder, Fr. Jean Gailhac and our Foundress, Mother St. Jean Pelissier. Today this ideal is as relevant, compelling, and energizing for me as was the spirit I observed in the Sisters at Marymount College. What a personal gift it is for me to be invited to reflect seriously on Aha! Moments which I appreciate as a Senior RSHM Sister living in the Western American Province, united in prayer everyday with all who continue to serve with hearts of goodness in RSHM ministries worldwide!

Today we are a seriously suffering Church with never-ending scandalous revelations. The future for the Church is very frightening because of these horrific scandals but, on the other hand, we have the spirit of Fr. Jean Gailhac, Mother St. Jean, Mother Marie Joseph Butler, Mother Gertrude Cain (WAP) and our esteemed Sisters who gave us this fantastic legacy of FAITH. I believe that they and others will not abandon the future RSHM life and ministry. In my ministry, I have discovered anew that action on all levels is indispensable but it is God's work. We

are His living hearts. We are Sisters, loving witnesses in spirit and in service to the truth to bring hope to the world.

The greatest gifts I have experienced, in more recent times, are in the power of prayer, the Eucharist, the Sacraments, the Rosary, and all the other wonderful and creative, ways of prayer and charity. We need to return with faith to sharing in the best and creative ways these important gifts that we inherit in faith from our families, our Church, and our RSHM community.

Sacred Heart of Mary intercede for us! We love you and trust you! Help us to live by the words of your Son: "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." (John 10:10) ♦

LIFE TO THE FULL...

RECOGNITION cont. from pg. 4

Association and later the Rome International Schools Association. She served as President of this illustrious organization, the Mediterranean Association of International Schools, until her retirement in 2013.

Before the work of Niall Ferguson and others on the power dynamic implicit in networks Sr Anne Marie set about creating an international network of schools, 19 on 3 continents. She linked students, faculty, and staff around objects of creating unity through our diversity, life-long love of learning, awareness of social justice and the work of this network is a powerful testament to the reali-



zation of the vision of one individual.

Reina O'Hale, MAIS Executive Director, expressed today the deep and moving impact Sr. Anne Marie has on the lives of those many thousands of people she has

worked with, faculty, staff, students, parents, and sisters. Her achievements as an educator, a builder of schools, a creator of networks, a champion of international education are a pale shadow to her achievements as a human being. Sr. Anne Marie embraces her humanity and ours; she "sees" people and cares for them. Her capacity for giving love is matched by her unbounded capacity for inspiring it. She is a maker of bridges, a creator of peace, an inspiration for us to follow and is richly deserving of the recognition MAIS has afforded her in the creation of this eponymous award.♦

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Mary Lungu, RSHM, on staff at St. Mulumba's Special School in Choma, Zambia

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