



# Heart

Spring 2009

A Journal of the Society of the Sacred Heart, U.S. Province

# ... to Heart

## Dear Friends,

the directness of that call.

At times, I think and pray in just the opposite way: “Please God, bless my plans, and help me with these problems that are on my plate.” When I do slow down and look up for a few minutes and see everything around me, it occurs to me that God’s creation and God’s ways with us might recommend God as the one to make the plans and name the problems. But I cannot keep this perspective on my own, and so it is a blessing to be engaged in planning – in this journey – with a community that helps me remember whose love we are sharing and whose work we are doing.

This issue of *Heart* invites us into a broad view of the world and a look at how those involved in the Sacred Heart mission are working toward “justice, peace, and the integrity of creation” – a goal essential to St. Madeleine Sophie’s vision and to our charism today.

Vivid portrayals of God’s handiwork are depicted in the cover photograph and in the artwork done by our Oakwood sisters, cherished in the spirituality articles, and celebrated at the heart of each of the features. This reveals that it is God’s agenda, God’s *plans*, that we have taken on as our own. In Oakland, California, and Jakarta, Indonesia, at the United Nations and in Network summer service settings all over the country, the “problems of God” are confronted as

In a recent homily, I heard these words: “Let God’s plans be your plans. Let God’s problems be your problems.” And I was taken with

*opportunities* where colleagues, benefactors, students, and religious of the Sacred Heart give of themselves and make incarnate in myriad ways the loving work of God. As a sign that God is with us, the continued success of the *In Mission for Life* campaign has been a resounding affirmation of the need today for the presence and mission of the Society in our changing world, and we are truly blessed and grateful!

In mid-summer this year, the religious will come together in a Provincial Assembly to plan for the next stages of our province life and ministerial work. We hope in our deliberations to live joyfully the phrase, “wholly contemplative and wholly apostolic” that has long described our spirituality and our life and appears once again in the General Chapter 2008 document.

On behalf of the religious, I would like to ask you, our Sacred Heart family, to pray with us and for us that we may “let God’s plans be our plans and let God’s problems be our problems;” that we as a community will give ourselves wholeheartedly to what is most needed of us now and in the years ahead.



With affection and gratitude  
in the Heart of Jesus,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paula Toner". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Paula Toner, RSCJ  
Provincial

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### Poetic Justice

For the list of RSCJ in higher education in the Winter 2008 issue (page 8), one among those not included was a big one: **Ruth Dowd, RSCJ**, Director of Graduate and Professional Studies at Manhattanville and co-creator of the Dowd/O'Gorman Writing Center. For the Winter 2009 issue devoted to higher education, Sister Dowd will contribute a keynote essay and all other RSCJ in tertiary education will be included.

# Heart

*Heart* is published two times a year to highlight the mission and ministries of the Society of the Sacred Heart, U.S. Province, for a wide circle of friends. The covers, photographs of hearts in nature, symbolic of Christ's presence at the heart of the universe, bear witness to the contemplative dimension of the Society's "wholly contemplative, wholly apostolic" mission: to discover and reveal God's love through the service of education.



Photo: Shirley Miller, RSCJ 17 mile drive, Carmel, California

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 Philippine Duchesne in 1818. For more information about the mission and ministries of the U.S. Province, please visit [www.rscj.org](http://www.rscj.org).

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## Under the UN Umbrella

By Cecile Meijer, RSCJ and Joan Kirby, RSCJ

*Developing new respect for the intersection of religion and politics inspires Joan Kirby, RSCJ, to do what she does as a representative of the Temple of Understanding at the United Nations. Each summer, Sister Kirby secures passes to allow high school interns to attend meetings of the General Assembly and UN committees to observe the workings of the UN firsthand and report on programs ranging from climate change to HIV/AIDS prevention.*

*Cecile Meijer, RSCJ, who has managed the Society of the Sacred Heart's NGO designation at the UN for the past six years – and serves on social development and other humanitarian committees – is in the process of applying for ECOSOC status for the Society. Here, in their own words, is an update on Society activities at the UN.*



### Attaining ECOSOC Status

By Cecile Meijer, RSCJ

**Living in forty-three countries** on six continents, we, RSCJ, witness what is happening in these countries from the ground up through our different ministries, many with people who live in poverty. Consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC) opens for us the possibility to influence UN discussions by contributing what life for ordinary people really looks like and lobbying for change based on people's hopes and sufferings – in other words, we have a chance to bring the human face of life on the ground to the international policy table. That too, we feel, is part of our vocation as educators.

ECOSOC is one of the main organs of the United Nations. It is responsible for international economic, social, cultural, educational, health and related matters as well as human rights. The Charter of the United Nations mentions Non Government Organizations (NGOs) explicitly – and only – in relation to ECOSOC, stating that the ECOSOC “may make suitable arrangements for consultation with non-governmental organizations which are concerned with matters within its competence.” (Article 71, UN Charter).

An organization, such as the Society of the Sacred Heart, seeking a closer UN-NGO relationship needs to apply for “consultative status” with ECOSOC. Once granted, such status allows an NGO to contribute to and influence decision-making processes by UN Member States, for example by interacting with Member States, monitoring agreements, briefing governments on citizens' concerns, and

advocating positions based on actual information from the ground. Depending on the type of consultative status, NGOs can make oral interventions or circulate written ones during ECOSOC meetings. In addition, they can attend formal meetings and are often invited to attend international conferences and General Assembly special sessions.

Obtaining consultative status involves numerous steps – and requires patience. First, the organization's application, which takes a while to complete, is reviewed by a special committee of ECOSOC. This committee then recommends which organizations should be granted one of three categories of consultative status: general, special, or roster. Recommendations then go to a full ECOSOC meeting for a final decision. To find out more about the RSCJ and the United Nations, log on to [www.internationalrscg.org](http://www.internationalrscg.org) and click on “Our Presence at the UN.”



Jerry Naunheim, Jr.

Cecile Meijer, RSCJ, (left) and Joan Kirby, RSCJ, in front of the United Nations building in New York City.



Left: Summer interns from 91st Street, left to right: Kate Mullin, Miranda Barbot, Cristina Lastres, Ana Cristina Guimaraes, Victoria De Freitas, Rebecca Spellissy.

## Summer Interns at Work

By Joan Kirby, RSCJ

**The goal of my work** at both the Temple of Understanding and the UN is to bring all of us closer to “other” cultures and religions. *Please Call Me By My True Names*, a verse by Thich Nhat Hanh, speaks of considering others supremely precious and not separating the sacred from the secular. We all seek the face of the living God; and when I see the faces of our students at the UN responding to what they are hearing – and talking it over with people from around the world – I know that we can learn to transcend our differences.

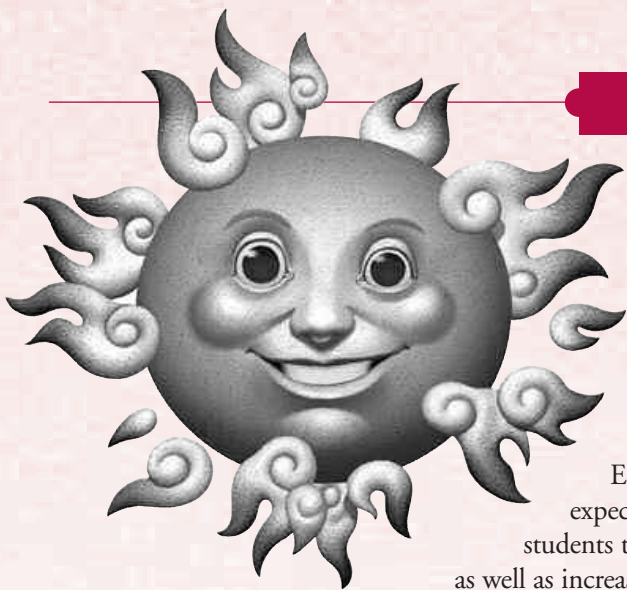
In 2008, sixteen young people participated in the program, and this summer we expect at least twenty, probably more. Most have come from Sacred Heart schools and are recommended by faculty members or encouraged by their friends; but this year we are expanding the program to invite students from inner city public schools.

The UN interns work on serious presentations about serious subjects: for example, in 2008 Celine Marino researched violence against women in time of war; and Maggie Lalley chose Jordan refugees as her point of focus. Ms. Marino heard an address by then Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and said: “Hearing a powerful woman speak opened our eyes. Now that I know about the violence, I can spread the word...it’s not something talked about, that female violence is a tool of war.” After Ms. Lalley attended a meeting of the Women’s Commission for Refugee Women and Children, she said it was hard not to come out being fatalistic, but she also said: “I learned not to give up hope, that even a small difference makes a difference.”

The Millennium Development Goals (MDG) have been a recent focus of the UN, and all of them relate to reducing poverty worldwide. In fact, several girls from Woodlands Academy in Chicago came to New York as interns because of their desire to help achieve those goals. And this year, a decade of interreligious dialogue has been proposed to encourage religious institutions around the world to collaborate in achieving them. I look forward to assembling this summer’s interns within that framework. ✦



Top: Maggie Lalley  
Bottom: Celine Marino



## *S*ummer Service 2009

Eleven venues, twelve different programs (some with multi-levels), and an expected 175 participants add up to a summer of service for Sacred Heart school students throughout the Network. Students will have direct experience with – as well as increasing awareness of – the real needs of people in our world.

For information, log on to: [www.sofie.org/resources/summerservice](http://www.sofie.org/resources/summerservice)

### **Bay to Waves: Serving in the City • San Francisco, California**

July 11 – July 17

Causes and effects of urban poverty and relevant environmental issues. Not recommended for the tourist.

### **After School Learning • Bloomfield Hills, Michigan**

June 29 – July 10

Educational enrichment and hands-on learning with children from Pontiac, Michigan. Lots of energy and a willingness to have fun is a must!

### **Helping with Hands and Hearts • Bridgeport, Connecticut**

June 19 – June 25

Building homes alongside the future homeowners. Students will also reflect on these experiences, pray together, and share their thoughts and concerns.

### **International Summer Service Project • Seattle, Washington**

July 31 – August 8

Serving the elderly, poor and marginalized of many nationalities and experiencing firsthand the international nature of the Society of the Sacred Heart. Reflection is a key element of this project.

### **St. Madeleine Sophie Center • El Cajon, California**

June 14 – 20

Working with and assisting in the training of developmentally disabled adults and developing a sense of community among those served as well as among co-workers.

### **Clown Academy • Princeton, New Jersey**

July 26 – August 1

Circus skills including juggling, unicycle riding, and tight rope walking; creating a clown character; sharing skills by teaching ten to twelve children from Martin House.

### **We Serve All Brands • Omaha, Nebraska**

July 19 – August 1

Serving disabled children at two different sites and also learning about careers in allied health fields and early childhood education. A bonus: the fabulous Duchesne Omaha hospitality!

### **ISEA: Institute for Social and Environmental Awareness Sprout Creek Farm, Poughkeepsie, New York**

July 19 – 29

Ten days on a working farm, eating off the land, working hard under the sun, making connections between New York pastures of plenty and Amazonian deforestation, and perhaps finding ways to make a difference.

### **Serving Immigrant Families • Houston, Texas**

June 6 – 13

Serving young children, ages 4-5, families in distress, and visiting teens from Central America in detention (as ICE views it) and in protective custody (as Catholic Charities views it).

### **Juvenile Justice Level II • Chicago, Illinois**

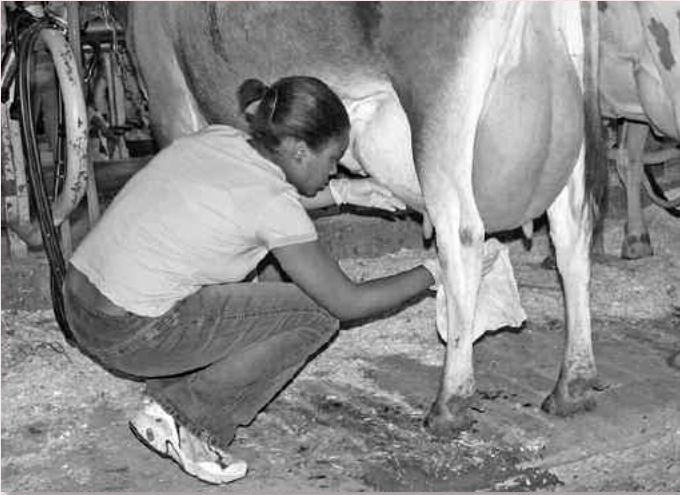
June 27 – July 5

A perspective on the experience of a teenager in our nation's criminal justice system in an urban setting and an ethnically diverse population.

### **U.S. Immigration Policy and Families Level II • Miami, Florida**

June 20 – 27

An in-depth investigation of past and present immigration policies in the United States and their impact upon families in this country.



**Planet Earth: Dig It • Sprout Creek Farm, Poughkeepsie, New York**

July 12 – 17

The students will discover how the planet works and find out why it is possible to feed the world and dig into issues that keep people hungry.

**Project Harvest I for Middle School Students •**

**Sprout Creek Farm, Poughkeepsie, New York**

August 2 – 7 AND August 9 – 14

Participants: Girls 13 or 14 years of age. Animal chores, harvesting food, preparing and serving meals at the Lunch Box, seminars and activities that focus on the environmental impacts of resource consumption.

**Agape Service Project for Middle School Students • Seattle, Washington**

June 20 – 28

Participants: Girls entering grades 7-9

A food drive, a migrant immersion day, service at the local migrant camps, and work at a food bank. Prayer and reflection will be an essential part of the experience.

**Clown Academy for Middle School Students • Princeton, New Jersey**

July 26 – August 1

Circus skills including juggling, unicycle riding, stilt walking, and swinging on a trapeze. Each student will also create a clown character and share her skills with children from Martin House.

**SACRED HEART INTERNATIONAL SERVICE PROJECT**

San Luis Potosi, Mexico: July 3 – 27

New Orleans, Louisiana: July 3 – 20

And for students beyond high school, the province offers the opportunity to work with children, teens and people in need and live in community with volunteers from different countries. For applications contact:

Imma De Stefanis, [idestefanis@rscj.org](mailto:idestefanis@rscj.org) (*English version*)

Reyna Gonzalez, RSCJ, [rerscj@hotmail.com](mailto:rerscj@hotmail.com) (*Spanish version*). ❖

Participants in Summer Service projects get up close and personal with the animals and the earth at Sprout Creek Farm in Poughkeepsie, New York.

*In Memoriam*

Please see [www.rscj.org](http://www.rscj.org)  
for biographical information  
on RSCJ who have died.

May they live in the fullness  
of God's love.

**Dorothy (Dotty) Clark**

January 20, 2009

**Angela Lubert**

January 23, 2009

**Carmela Parisi**

February 9, 2009

**Margaret Conway**

February 24, 2009

**Ursula Kirk**

February 28, 2009

**Helen Hammack**

March 16, 2009

**Marie Asunta (Val) Valerio**

March 24, 2009

## In Mission for Life

# Blessed and grateful

By Shirley Miller, RSCJ



St. Louis/St. Charles regional campaign leaders: (left to right) Jeanne O'Fallon, Harriet Switzer, Rosemary Gidionsen, Dolly Johannesman, Jane Cannon, Patty Arnold, Chair, and Molly Hyde.



Regional leaders of the Boston/Rhode Island campaign. Left: Toni Curry, and right: Kathleen Hegenbart, Chair, with Paula Toner, RSCJ, provincial.

*Blessed, grateful...* These words keep rising up as I reflect on the progress of the Society's *In Mission for Life* campaign. We are blessed with leadership, volunteers, benefactors, and contributions and pledges from hundreds of alumnae/i, RSCJ, collaborators, associates, families and friends. We are blessed with wisdom and guidance from advisors. We are blessed by the faith so many have in the future of the Society and blessed by their care for and gratitude to our elderly sisters. We are blessed by their generosity, even in the midst of a fragile economy.

Be Mardel, RSCJ, an extraordinary leader in our California regional campaign, wrote recently: "Fund raising is not my favorite thing! But working on our campaign the last eighteen months has been an enriching and energizing experience, as has been the opportunity to meet again so many of my former students. I am deeply moved by their interest in the current welfare of the Society and their gratitude and devotion to the religious who touched their lives. This has been true not only of alumnae and alumni, but also of the Children of Mary and the friends and parents with whom we have met. Their lives of faith and their generosity have truly inspired me. I have been so impressed by the dedication of our leaders and advisors, and I am very grateful for this opportunity to serve the Society even in a small way."

The mission continues "to discover and make known God's love in the heart of the world." An anonymous donor gave a precious gift to our new provincial offices – a statue of Philippine Duchesne and a child, a miniature copy of the life size bronze sculpted by artist Harry Weber, which stands on the property of the Academy of the Sacred Heart, St. Charles. The child, feet off the ground, reaches up to be embraced in love by Philippine.



At the open house for the new offices, Paula Toner, RSCJ, provincial, blessed the space, asking all in attendance to raise their hands and ask God to make it a center of love for all who enter. Together we prayed:

*Gracious God,*

You raise up from among your people women and men  
known for their lively faith and spirit of generosity.

We recall with gratitude the memory of Rose Philippine Duchesne  
whom the Native Peoples called “the woman who prays always,”  
whom children loved for her simplicity and faith,  
whom the Sacred Heart community honors for  
her courage and dedication,  
her missionary zeal and her spirit of sacrifice.

Grant us the same spirit  
and a willingness to broaden our hearts  
to become missionaries in our attitude and in our prayer,  
and count us among those who live your message of love  
in our broken world.

*Amen.*

As *Heart* goes to press, we are grateful that we have received almost \$12,000,000 in gifts, pledges and realized bequests – 30% of our \$40,000,000 five year goal. Regional campaigns are active in California, New York, Boston, and St. Louis/St. Charles, and we are beginning plans in New Orleans and Omaha. We move ahead with our campaign plan with “courage and confidence” – but also with great sensitivity to the challenges everyone is facing.

Meister Eckhart, a 13th century mystical writer, said: “If my only prayer was ‘Thank you,’ that would be enough.” That is my simple prayer, again and again, for you, our readers. ***Thank you!*** ❖



Virginia Murillo, campaign volunteer and friend of the Society, and Sister Helen McHugh at Oakwood.

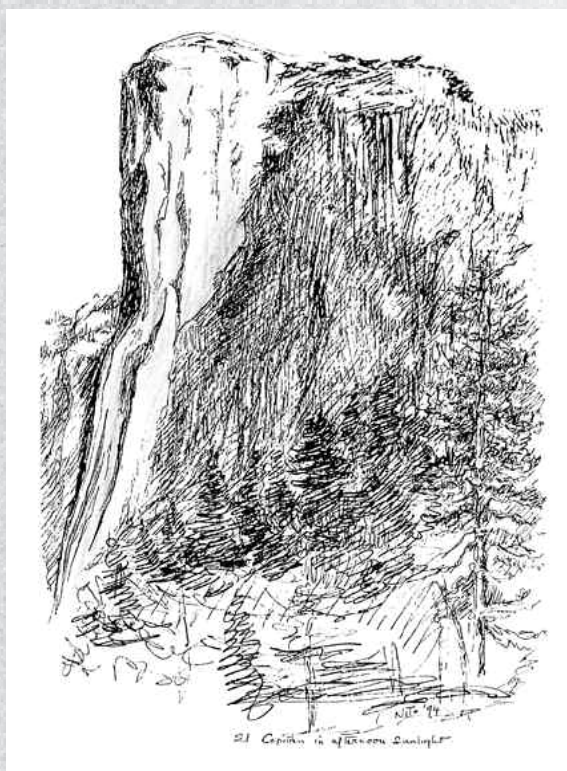


Jerry Naunheim, Jr.

“Count us among those who live your message of love...”

**Art does not change us, life does.  
Art manifests the change.**  
— Gin O'Meara, RSCJ

*Art...*



Top: Banff National Park by Nita Villeré  
Below: El Capitan, Yosemite National Park by Nita Villeré

**Twice a week at Oakwood**, Anita (Nita) Villeré, RSCJ, teaches nine to twelve students, age 86 to 94, how to do watercolor. “Ellen Hoffman is not able to really see, so she imagines,” says Nita. “She always sits in the same place and knows where the colors are – and she never misses a class.” In fact, no one misses the art classes unless they are sick or at the hospital.

The group expands and contracts as life changes, just as individual expressions change. One time they might work on spring flowers, another on landscapes that become greeting cards. Art brings people together, not only in the art room at Oakwood, but through the sale of greeting cards made from the artwork of the sisters. “I get orders from people I don’t even know,” says Nita.

Nita came to Oakwood fifteen years ago; and she was not trained as an art teacher. She was introduced to art as a freshman at Maryville, but there was no degree program then – and although young Nita was taught post-impressionist watercolor, she rarely taught art until recently. After she was sent to the Carondelet Senior Center in St. Louis to assist in the ministry there, she began teaching art.

And on a trip out west with Be Mardel, RSCJ, she got her first pen and sketchbook. “Be opened up the West for me,” says Nita. “I didn’t even have watercolors at that point.” She sketched Yosemite and Banff and Lake Tahoe – and was finally able to do something she had been interested in all her life but had not had time for.

In the 1980’s, Nita had worked for the Social Apostolate of the Archdiocese in New Orleans, and one of the activities for seniors was an art class. “I saw how people came to that Senior Center hungry for food – and then they stayed all day and we started that art class,” says Nita. “I saw how people could grow together and have a good time.”

When Nita arrived in Atherton, a small group of the older RSCJ at Oakwood asked her to help them with art. Thus began the regular watercolor class that no one wants to miss. In addition to Sister Hoffman, the class includes Helen Donohoe, Helen Lorch, Rose Chen, Mary Munch, Mamie Jenkins, Ida Rinne, and Lorraine Lawrence. Over the years the groups have changed as life has changed, and the art continues to give life. ❖

# as life changes



Above: Bow River, Canada by Nita Villeré, RSCJ

Left: spring floral by Ida Rinne, RSCJ

Right: red poppies by Helen Lorch, RSCJ



AP Images / Haraz N. Ghanbari



Jerry Naunheim, Jr.



K-8 principal Maurice Harper counsels a young student.

Top: Members of the St. Martin de Porres choir, at left, at the Kennedy Center on March 8, 2009. They also shook hands with President Obama. Choir director Frederica von Stade stands behind the President.

Bottom: School president Barbara Dawson, RSCJ, center, with students at St. Martin de Porres.

# St. Martin

A place everyone loves to be



Katie Ackerly

# de Porres

In one of the worst drug/gang neighborhoods in Oakland, California, stands a school where positive energy abounds: a place of curiosity, discipline, growth, security, and faith. A place everyone loves to be.

Named for a Peruvian saint who was the illegitimate son of a Spanish nobleman and a freed black slave, St. Martin de Porres (SMDP) School was started in 1996 to serve the families of West and Northwest Oakland. Currently, the school is located on two campuses – a K-5 campus at Martin Luther King and 41st Street and a middle school 6-8 campus at Peralta and 10th. Good feelings and high energy prevail at both locations; students, teachers, parents, staff, grandparents, contractors, volunteers, and even the mailman like being there.

## The students, the parents, the grandparents

**The students** generally live along the San Pablo Avenue corridor from the Port of Oakland on the West to the Southern border of Berkeley. They are diverse and, in general, financially needy.

Girls wear plaid jumpers; the boys, black pants and maroon sweatshirts or sweaters. “We bring some structure to students’ lives – a constant many don’t have at home – and we help them understand how to navigate the system so they can be productive adults,” says school president Barbara Dawson, RSCJ. “We give them expectations to live up to, not just for the sake of rules, but because somebody else will expect them to be at work some day. Sometimes SMDP is their only outlet so they love to come here. Many of our students just stay in their houses – except for school.”

**The parents** work hard to give their children an education at SMDP and almost all work outside the home. Most of the African American parents have a high school education and many have, or are pursuing, higher education. While some Latino parents have been in the United States a number of years, most are recently arrived from Mexico – and the vast majority are mono-lingual Spanish speaking.

SMDP parents typically work in healthcare, transportation, construction, landscaping, housecleaning and related trades. Their median income is \$24,000, and parents commit to thirty service hours as part of their contract with the school. “It’s been hard for some neighborhood groups here in Oakland to work together,” said Sister Dawson. “We have the same kids as the public schools have – but our parents have gotten it together and made a commitment to their children.”

**The grandparents** help raise the students too, mainly because the parents are at work. A grandparents group meets weekly at the K-5 campus; they support one another in supporting their grandchildren. “These folks are seventy-five years old and still working,” says Sister Dawson. “And I know every single family here. We use those family relationships and do what everybody knows works. We keep the kids safe – and they know it.”

*continued*

## The teachers

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K-8 principal Maurice Harper says his grandmother, an African Methodist, liked the corduroy pants the boys wore and insisted he go to school at the Sacred Heart Parish in Oakland. “So I did,” he said, “I even took the name “Martin de Porres” as my confirmation name...years later, when Sister Barbara invited me to work at this school, I wanted to be that same kind of caring, connecting person who got me through grade school. I love being here.”

It shows. Mr. Harper was part coach, part choreographer, as he rehearsed energetic kindergarten girls with pom-poms spelling out SMDP for the Catholic Schools Week parade and pointed out how quietly a VERY energetic kindergarten boy could close the door...And perhaps only he could get on the intercom first thing on a rainy morning (an unusual situation in Oakland) to announce that recess and lunch would be indoors, and settle even the kindergartners with his calming voice: “Peace...quiet...peace. We pray for the gift of understanding...together we acknowledge our blessings and work to achieve our dreams.”

Two RSCJ are on the faculty – and both teach math. Trudy Considine, RSCJ, herself one of eleven children, calls SMDP “a place that feels like home.” Working with the advanced math class, she said she enjoys it most when the class can do something special. “It’s exciting to stretch and do more, exciting to see the kids excel,” she said. “What’s especially fun is to be able to go on field trips and take them beyond the regular classroom.” Kathy Buschman, RSCJ, says it is important for each child to feel loved for who he or she is, each and every day. “I enjoy teaching at St. Martin de Porres Middle school,” she says. “There is never a dull moment and I am never bored! I love the spontaneity, enthusiasm and boundless energy the students bring to school.”

Volunteer teacher – and noted mezzo-soprano – Frederica von Stade, herself a Sacred Heart (Noroton) alumna, also loves being at SMDP. Ms. Von Stade directs the St. Martin de Porres Children’s Choir – and also helps drive students to different musical events. In fact, she arranged for the choir to sing at the Kennedy Center on March 8, 2009, in a special concert celebrating Senator Ted Kennedy’s birthday.

## What do you dream for your child?

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Middle School counselor Dennis Flannery says he wants 7th and 8th graders to understand that high school is the next step and get them talking about college. “We also talk about the unfairness of the world,” he said. “I tell them there’s a good chance they will be stopped for doing something they didn’t do – and that how they respond will affect their life.”



Jerry Naunheim, Jr.



Jerry Naunheim, Jr.

Top: Trudy Considine, RSCJ, with a young math student.  
Bottom: Positive energy – and right answers – at St. Martin de Porres.

Topics discussed at a January 2009 faculty meeting at SMDP included curriculum mapping for the rest of the year, a special parade and writing contest to celebrate Catholic Schools Week, and the behavior of individual students.

“We check in regularly on how we are doing with specific students,” says curriculum specialist Kathy Gannon-Briggs, “on whether they are getting along on their own and with others – as well as on any “math gaps” or other study-related issues.” Ms. Gannon-Briggs not only makes sure SMDP adheres to state and diocesan standards, she makes sure the curriculum and teaching methods are student-centered.

Humor is high on the list of positive energies at SMDP; a *Top Ten Reasons to Study Math* poster says: “Because studying pi is delicious.” But the questions asked by the faculty are serious: How do we help this student? What do you dream for your child?

### A new model, a multitude of tasks

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Sister Dawson says that for any inner city school to survive, it must come up with a new educational model, something different – and effective. By way of explaining her strategic approach, she said: “I’m a lawyer as well as a religious of the Sacred Heart so I ask: How do we do this?” Her answer was to use the Sacred Heart school structure that separates the day-to-day tasks, the job of the principal, from the administrative overview, the job of the president, and tailor that structure to the community being served.

SMDP is unique in its multiple partnerships, wide array of learnings, and high quality education at low cost. Through strong connections with such organizations and schools as Children’s Hospital Center for the Vulnerable Child, Catholic Charities of the East Bay, the Oakland Community Organization, St. Mary’s College, and the Jesuit School of Theology, SMDP is able to share ideas and resources and offer many more courses and programs. “Sacred Heart Schools in Atherton and Schools of the Sacred Heart in San Francisco are among our staunchest supporters,” says Sister Dawson.

Sports play an important role in the life of most SMDP students, so in addition to academic partnerships, several sport-oriented collaborations have been created. In conjunction with the Prescott-Joseph Center, a soccer league has been created; and last year, the 2nd and 3rd graders at SMDP won diocesan championships!

Multi-tasking takes on new meaning at this high-energy school. The array of white binders on Sister Dawson’s office shelf is an indicator of what her typical day might include: Governance, Communications Committee, Strategic



Katie Ackerly

The St. Martin de Porres urban gardens are a testament to faith and partnership.

Planning, Current Events, and ITBS (which stands for Iowa Tests of Basic Skills – the gold standard in evaluating scholastic achievement).

“Every one at SMDP is skilled in the art of juggling a variety of tasks – and is critical to our life here,” she says. “Of course Oakland was the home of Jazz – as well as the Black Panthers – so perhaps it’s no surprise that a gift for integrating diverse elements is present here.”

### And – the garden

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Something else everyone loves about SMDP is the garden. On a chaotic street corner, a vibrant garden of nutritious food and beautiful flowers is thriving. Thanks to a partnership with Oakland Based Urban Gardens (OBUGS – you’ve got to love an acronym like that!) the students at SMDP are learning how to plant seeds, water and nurture tender plants, and watch them grow. Growth, security, faith. What’s not to love? ✦

# Understanding another side of the world

By Nance O'Neil, RSCJ

As the Society celebrates its twentieth anniversary in Jakarta, it is perhaps more significant to mark the increase in our understanding of other cultures. And their acceptance of ours.

From the outset, the Sacred Heart presence in Indonesia was intended to help educate and support the people there. Another goal was having the chance to live in Muslim neighborhoods in order to promote relationships among Catholics and Muslims. More Muslims live in Indonesia than in Iran, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia combined... so we have been blessed.

The Society of the Sacred Heart ministry in Indonesia began when the central team decided to honor the canonization of Saint Philippine by starting a community in a new "country of the future." Indonesia was selected. And Helen McLaughlin, the superior general, said to me: "Why don't you go?" And I replied: "Where's Indonesia?"

Four RSCJ were originally intended to go; the Archbishop, Leo Soekoto, had invited us, and he suggested that we not come "as missionaries." But I was the only one who managed to get there and, like Philippine in the United States, I lived with the Ursulines for a time. It is noteworthy how the Ursulines have acted as catalytic agents in furthering and

supporting the Society's mission! Anyhow, Barbara Dawson, RSCJ, arrived two years later and by then we were firmly established as teachers at the Catholic university, Atma Jaya – which means "living spirit."

Since we were sponsored by the university, I had expected to teach. First, it was Business English, and now I teach at an inter-congregational seminary as well as at a mostly Muslim university.

We have a truly international community in Jakarta, and people are put in touch with us by way of other parts of the world. In addition to teaching, we work with an NGO that empowers the urban poor to defend their rights, runs a radio station where poor people learn to become news presenters, and serves displaced communities with education.

This winter, a seminar on Saint Madeleine Sophie drew over 100 people; two Catholics and two Muslims presented papers on her spirituality, on the inner and the outer life of the spirit. Some of the comments by Muslims were especially appreciative.

Muhammad Bagir, a professor of mysticism at the Islamic College for Advanced Studies, said: "The Sufis are not far from Sophie, or, we can say that Saint Sophie isn't very different from the Sufis in explaining that the human heart has to be pure to enter 'The Holy One.' Purity and holiness of heart mean letting go of everything except the Divine. I see the life of Sophie as Contemplative and Active. She knew there are two types of soul. The first type...goes out energetically to work and returns to the source of interior life and prayer. The second...seeks for quiet, silence...from an inner life they go forth to love and share the secret they have met in their silence. Sophie was the second sort."

## Indonesia



Indonesia is an archipelago in Southeast Asia consisting of more than 17,500 islands (6,000 are inhabited) and straddling the equator. Land area: 736,000 sq. mi., about three times the size of Texas; Population (July 2009 est.): 240.3 million.

## RSCJ in Indonesia

Brigid Keogh was an early pioneer, and many other RSCJ from the U.S. Province have spent time in Indonesia. In addition to Sister O'Neil, those who have worked full-time include: Barbara Dawson, Sis Flynn, Bonnie Kearney, Nancy Murphy, and Sally Rude.



Top: Members of the RSCJ community in Jakarta.

Center: Choi Sung Kyung, RSCJ, in traditional Korean dress.

Bottom: Jovita Triwiludjeng (Lulut), RSCJ, sharing the traditional yellow rice cone.



## Lulut's Story

A clear indication of the growth in cultural understanding is the profession of our first Indonesian RSCJ. The Society went to Jakarta to help make God's love visible there, and it is with a sense of deep gratitude that we welcome our first sister from that country. **Jovita Triwiludjeng** – called **Lulut** – was professed February 1, 2009, in Rome. There are two more novices now.

Lulut spent a few months at St. Martin de Porres School (see page 12), at Oakwood, in San Francisco at the Schools of the Sacred Heart, and in St. Louis and St. Charles to study Philippine. She also worked with Mary McGann, RSCJ, in Berkeley, the Little Sisters of the Poor in New York, and Sprout Creek Farm in Poughkeepsie – and she visited Teresian House. The nuns there still remember her with joy.

The thanksgiving celebration in Jakarta for Lulut's profession was a howling success! She shared her own experiences of the pierced Heart at two Masses and again for our over 250 guests Sunday morning before lunch. Strength, poise, simplicity and depth – that's how I describe it.

Fortunately, the caterers put up a tent – it is the rainy season. But on the way to church, a full rainbow shone, the sun came out, and the rains didn't come until mid-afternoon when more than half the guests had gone.

The "program" was delightful. The kids' mothers adapted a hymn and changed the words specifically for Lulut; the Muslim mothers had said to the Catholics, you choose a song you all know and we'll learn it. Choi Sung Kyung, RSCJ, here for her pre-probation international experience, did a breathtakingly beautiful Korean dance in traditional dress. Then Lulut cut the traditional yellow rice cone – splitting the top half between her mother and me. And everyone ate – lots, and delicious – and still at the end, there was plenty left over to share with neighborhood families.

You can imagine what the preparations involved. I heard the practices of the kids and their mothers every morning. Sis Flynn, RSCJ, and Digna Dacanay, RSCJ, came to join us, and there were lots of folks wanting to see them. We were all amazed – and she was, too – at how much Indonesian Sis remembered after ten years' absence.

We thought Digna's language would be a help with the three "live-ins" who had arrived from Timor just before Lulut and I got home from Rome. They washed and set up the 200 chairs we had borrowed from the parish. Ten minutes were extracted from the two-hour video of the profession, but we could not get it to show on the computer! At the last minute, our neighbor electrician, Pak Adhi, found a computer nerd friend who came and installed what was needed. This at about 4:00 when Lulut needed to show it at Mass at 5:30! He had seen the caterers installing lights and fans in the tent and came, unasked, to oversee since "they won't understand our system." Good neighbor!

May we all be good neighbors to each other's needs as we continue to live and work with people whose culture may be different but whose heart energy is the same – around the world. ❖

*The RSCJ presence in Indonesia officially began with the arrival of Nance O'Neil, RSCJ, in Jakarta, on the island of Java, in February of 1989. Sister O'Neil had just ended a six-year tenure as the first provincial of the newly formed U.S. province. Immediately after her arrival, Sister O'Neil lived with Ursuline sisters, another striking parallel to the experience of Philippine who lived for six weeks in an Ursuline convent in New Orleans after her arrival from France.*

# Experiencing the earth

By Margo Morris, RSCJ

**S**ave the earth! The rallying cry is familiar. But we've got it backwards; a planetary logic seems to have escaped us. We pray to God for health, life, prosperity, and grace but tend to overlook what supports us, feeds us, and, in a very real sense, "grows" us: Planet Earth.

Earth, sometimes gracious and magnanimous, sometimes volatile and stinting, always provides us with what we need for survival. Yet most of us show no comprehensive understanding of the planet, even after millennia of walking it, working it, and eating it!

We have instead spent hundreds of years creating little worlds, temperature and light controlled, that insulate us from Earth. We live longer, as a result, and with less hardship, to be certain. But we appear to have lost our relationship with our host and our home. This propensity for disconnection – from Earth, from one another, and even from ourselves – is a characteristic that we alone as a species appear to possess. And ironically, we spend our lives trying to become whole.

Why is it so difficult to connect with all that would give us life? Perhaps we need to look to the planet itself for an answer. It seems to be a natural function of earth to literally create chaos in order to arrive at a new level of function and consciousness.

Most likely, Earth can survive us if it has to. But I believe we are now being given a chance to consciously evolve – and to discover that we are neither top nor center, but are one among many life forms, inextricably linked to one another for survival, growth, and development.



What do we need to “get it”? What can we do to consciously connect?

If we remove just a little of that insulation, we can experience Earth itself relieving us of our burdensome need for dominance. Earth can restore our balance if we are willing to notice, listen, and adjust the way we think about things like food, and trees, and animals.

We do not need to move to the country and eschew electricity to experience Earth; the shift required is an interior one. But a few practical, enjoyable activities can enhance the experience.

For example, we might grow herbs in a kitchen window planter and use them with gratitude when we cook. We can go to a farmer’s market, talk to the people who grow the food – and maybe even go visit them. Or we can simply tune in to the sounds of the earth – the wind in the trees, the rain on the roof, the morning and evening birds.

Entering into this kind of conscious relationship not only restores balance but gives us genuine pleasure. Experiencing the Earth in this way reminds us that we do belong in the universe and are profoundly connected to all of creation.

Save the earth? Let us allow earth to save us and deliver us whole to the God whose love infuses ALL. ❖

*Margo Morris, RSCJ, was a co-founder of the Farm at Convent of the Sacred Heart, Greenwich, moved with it to Poughkeepsie, New York, where it became Sprout Creek Farm, and has been the director since March 2001.*

# Compost and the interior life

By Jane O'Shaughnessy, RSCJ

In the mid-nineties, while a member of the newly formed Associates group in Boston, I began to consciously weave my own spirituality into the framework of Sacred Heart spirituality. I was intrigued by the concept of the interior life. Mary Quinlan, RSCJ, who was dedicated to Society history and to our fledgling group, wrote, "As greatly as Mother Barat esteemed formal prayer, she once said that interior life is more than prayer, by which she meant that the constant recollection of God's presence at least through an obscure awareness throughout the activities of the day was of major importance in the development of prayer."

Madeleine Sophie Barat was raised in rural France, a vineyard keeper's daughter, and was lovingly attuned to nature. She wrote, "An interior person is like a sunflower, always turning toward the Sun of Justice to receive its radiance."

In our day, this radiance of God in nature, is a theme deepened by the writings of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. The French Jesuit integrated his scientific understanding of evolution with his religious understanding of the "divine milieu," the immanence of the divine continually creating and uniting our world. Teilhard helped shift our consciousness of a personal interior life to knowing ourselves as being interconnected and interdependent within an evolving universe. Our interior life abides within what we now understand as the interiority of the universe.

When we in the U.S. Province last gathered as an assembly/chapter in 2007, we voted to endorse the Earth Charter, joining "a global partnership to care for Earth and one another." The preamble states "Earth, our home, is



alive..." In that endorsement, we committed our spiritual journey to a deepening awareness of the integrity of creation.

My relationship with God developed, as one's does, through my personal and unique experience. During my Earth Mother phase, raising two little girls on 20 acres of land with wild blueberries, gardens and farm animals, my apple core went into the pile of aging horse manure to decompose, and then be turned back into the soil to feed the strawberry plants. Composting very simply became a part of my

life. This natural act is a compelling alternative to tossing vegetable waste into the trash. Plastic bags filled with garbage produce toxic gases that poison the earth, air, water. For me, composting is a spiritual practice.

I have seen, in poorer areas of our world, garbage burning in piles on the streets because there was no other option. And I have read of trash being barged around the world in search of a dumping ground. These realities weigh on my heart and call for a response. Trusting in the interiority of the universe, I know that a small act locally makes a difference globally. Following nature's course of integrity – even on so basic a level as composting – is an act of solidarity, reconciliation and justice.

In this age of ecological planetary crisis, we learn from Earth, our home. And, like the sunflowers, we can turn and open to full participation in co-creating a new Earth. ❖

*Jane O'Shaughnessy, RSCJ, has served as a spiritual director at the Spiritual Ministry Center in Ocean Beach, California, since 2006.*

# Spirituality after all these years

By Mary Lou Convy, Cathy Hoehn, and Margaret Stude

*“After all these years,” three Villa Duchesne alums take walks and play paddle tennis together – and describe how their spirituality continues to grow.*

*Cathy*



**When my friends and I were asked** to write a short reflection about where we are in our spiritual lives in light of our Sacred Heart education, I realized that I have no sense of “then” and “now.” What I do have is an awareness of synchronistic events that have drawn me closer and closer to my own deepest attractions.

One formative recollection I have is of listening to the reading of the School Rule in the assembly room and internalizing an understanding of how Saint Madeline Sophie insisted on being educated to “a lively faith.” This understanding made a lasting impression on me; but the words were not nearly as influential as the climate set in the schools and the lives of the women religious who taught me. I learned that a lively faith is not a belief in this or that, but a life lived in union with the beating of the Sacred Heart of Jesus – Love in action, centered in prayer.

Synchronistically, opportunities for exercising my own lively faith have appeared for me over the years. Thanks to my husband, John, a surgeon, I have become a medical missionary! For the past eight years, we have spent time each November working with Helping Hands Medical Mission in El Salvador.

Two of our four children have come with us to make visits to barely accessible homes with stick walls and thatch roofs that house whole families in one or two smoke-filled rooms. Most everyone develops breathing problems; yet we are routinely greeted with warm and humbling hospitality.

These trips have shown me that Love in action is a reciprocal gift – one we give to and receive from the people we serve.

*Catherine Doyle Hoehn attended Barat College and graduated from St. Louis University. She has four children and three grandchildren, for whom she and her husband love to babysit, and teaches English as a second language to women immigrants.*

## Mary Lou



**When asked to write something** for *Heart*, I felt a little like Moses when he was asked to lead the Israelites out of Egypt... WHO ME?? That's what came to mind because our scripture study group is studying the book of Exodus this year, so I'm learning a lot about Moses – and the journey we all take.

Earlier this year, I heard the story of the Cherokee Indian speaking to his grandson about the two wolves that live inside each of us. One wolf is composed of evil: anger, envy, anxiety, sorrow, regret, greed; and the other wolf is full of good: peace, love, hope, humility, kindness, generosity, truth. The grandson thinks about the two wolves for a moment and then asks his grandfather which one will grow. And the old man replies: "The one that you feed." I loved that story and think about it a lot.

The Cornerstone scripture study involves daily prayer and questions related to a certain scripture passage plus a weekly gathering with talks and small group sharing – all of which help me continue to try to find God in all the moments of my life... like imagining the recent snow falling as manna from Heaven, and looking for grace in the traffic jam, and knowing the gift of my paddle group as grace on my journey.

*Mary Lou Munsch Convy, a graduate of St. Louis University, is a realtor who enjoys nature, her friends, travel, tap-dancing, and continuing education. She and her husband George are the parents of three children.*

## Margaret

**After our twenty-fifth reunion** at Villa Duchesne, some of us decided we would like to see one another more often – without making a big deal about it. So we started playing paddle tennis once a week and have continued pretty regularly ever since, substituting walks when the weather is bad. The exercise is great – but the time talking afterward is the best part.

Sometimes we need a hug or a smile or someone to call us by name; sometimes we see ourselves differently through another's eyes; sometimes we notice the world in a whole new way; sometimes we celebrate graduations, marriages, births; and sometimes we simply realize we are not alone.

The gift of our friendship has strengthened us – through the care and deaths of parents, depression, alcoholism, cancer, divorce – you name it. No matter how in control we think we are, each day is a mystery; and whatever happens is God's gift. Reflection and prayer are ways I accept his gift, and the time with my friends is a big part of that reflection.

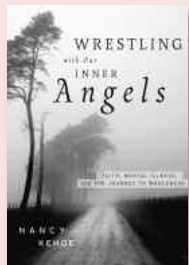
Micah, Chapter 6, verse 8 says: "This is what the Lord asks of you: only this, to act justly, to love tenderly, and to walk humbly with your God." That seems to me exactly what we are doing when we get together. ❖

*Margaret Kriegshauser Stude, happily married for forty-two years, is the mother of five children and the grandmother of ten. She is a graduate of Manhattanville as well as Villa Duchesne and loves travel, sports, and reading.*



# Good words

written by members of the Sacred Heart family



***Wrestling with Our Inner Angels*** by Nancy Kehoe, RSCJ

*Wrestling with Our Inner Angels* is Nancy Kehoe's compelling, intimate, and moving story of how she brought her background as a psychologist and a Religious of the Sacred Heart to bear in the groups she formed to explore the role of faith and spirituality in the treatment of the mentally ill. Through fascinating stories of her own spiritual journey, she gives readers of all backgrounds and interests new insights into the inner lives of the mentally ill and new ways of thinking about the role of spirituality and faith in all our lives.

***Church Ethics and Its Organizational Context*** by Jean Bartunek, RSCJ

*Church Ethics and Its Organizational Context* is the first book to provide a broadly interdisciplinary approach to understanding the leadership crisis in the Catholic Church in the wake of the sex abuse scandal and how it was handled. The essays in this book raise questions that have implications far beyond this current issue, to much broader issues such as the role of professionalism in ethics and what it means for an organization to engage in moral action.

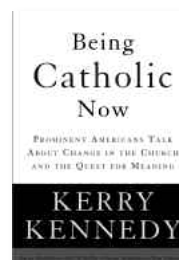


***St. Thérèse of Lisieux*** by Mary Frohlich, RSCJ

Thérèse of Lisieux, a French Carmelite nun who died at age twenty-four, was known during her life to only a few of her fellow nuns. Through the posthumous publication of her autobiography, she became one of the most popular saints of modern times, and, on the basis of her spiritual path which she called "the Little Way," was declared a Doctor of the Church. This selection of her writings is the best and most accessible general anthology of her work in English.

***Being Catholic Now*** by Kerry Kennedy, Stone Ridge 1969 to 1972

For Kerry Kennedy, her family's faith was a constant source of strength and solace. As an adult, she came to question some of the attitudes and teachings of the Catholic Church while remaining an impassioned believer in its role as a defender of the poor and oppressed. Kennedy asked thirty-seven American Catholics to speak candidly about their faith and their feelings regarding the way the Church hierarchy is moving forward. Speaking their minds are businesspeople, actors and entertainers, educators, journalists, politicians, nuns, priests – even a cardinal. All have an illuminating insight or perspective.



***Re-Imagining Mary*** by Mariann Burke, RSCJ

*Re-Imagining Mary* is about the power of image and imagination and our need for the Divine Feminine. Jungian analyst Mariann Burke offers personal reflections and suggests symbolic meanings in Marian paintings by Fra Angelico, Nicolas Poussin, Piero della Francesca, Duccio, Salvador Dali, and others. Exploring Mary as cosmic symbol, she intuits Mary not only as carrier of powerful goddess energies of the past but as powerful maternal matrix in the present. ✦



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Yellow daffodils painted by Ellen Hoffman, RSCJ, one of many examples of **Art... as life changes.**



Katie Ackerly

Urban vegetable gardens – as well as people – thrive at **St. Martin de Porres: A place everyone loves to be.**



Jeff Borda, www.flickr.com

A rare Indonesian rainbow appears for a newly professed RSCJ in **Understanding another side of the world.**