



Heart

Winter 2012

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



...to Heart

Gathered around the table of life, where each one offers her bread as nourishment for all, we recognize dialogue as the way to a more human world, a life with Spirit.

(Chapter 2008 Documents)

Dear Friends,

This issue of *Heart* magazine brings you both love and a promise of prayer from each member of the Society of the Sacred Heart in the United States. *Heart* offers you several reflections that speak about dialogue – across countries, religions and faith traditions, among schools, within the context of our internationality. The heart of dialogue is to discover God in a new way, which is our hope for you.

In the last few months, the provincial team has been visiting our communities, our ministries and the Sacred Heart family throughout the United States. This wonderful opportunity has helped me to see the mosaic that makes up our country and our Sacred Heart family with fresh eyes. My prayer has often centered on the question “*What is the call to the Society of the Sacred Heart and our Sacred Heart family today as we move forward into the 21st Century?*”

During this journey, I have been thinking about the historical purpose of religious congregations in the life of the Church. Usually, religious congregations arose as a direct response to a need in society, often in times of crisis. In the case of the Society of the Sacred Heart, St. Madeleine Sophie saw the need during the time of the French Revolution for reconciliation and rebuilding of society by spreading the love of the Heart of Christ primarily through the education of young women and the nurturance of souls, what we might call today “spirituality.”

The international Society of the Sacred Heart chose five priorities at the 2008 Chapter, one of which is *Dialogue Toward Communion: Walking with Humanity*. This priority recognizes the central role of dialogue in relationship. In true dialogue we open ourselves and make ourselves vulnerable out

of respect for the other. This openness is, indeed, the only way to create communion.

We are more aware that to understand others and journey with them we must enter into their reality and let ourselves be changed by their lives.

We discover that true communion happens when we touch the heart, and there recognize the presence of the Spirit. (Chapter 2008 Documents)

Perhaps, if we think about it, we are always in some process of dialogue. Questions we have to ask ourselves are “Is this dialogue leading to communion? Are we discovering the face of God in the midst of this moment?”

We ask you to pray with us for a new moment of dialogue in the Society’s history in North America. The U.S. and Canadian provinces are in the midst of an important dialogue process (see article on page 8), one that will forever change us. By entering it with open hearts and welcoming attitudes, we find there is no “other.” Instead we find real communion rooted in the Heart of Christ. Let us pray together that this new life for the Society in North America may also be a new call to respond to the challenges in our country and continent today. And, may the spirit of Sophie guide us!



In the heart,

Barbara Dawson rscj.

Barbara Dawson, RSCJ
Provincial

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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.



"Humboldt Heart" © Caitlin Greene

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.

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Province celebrates two vow ceremonies

The U.S. Province celebrated two vow ceremonies in the summer of 2012. On the first day of July, Mary Frohlich, RSCJ, made her final vows at Villa Lante, the Society of the Sacred Heart's house in Rome; and on July 18, Juliet Mousseau, RSCJ, made her first vows at the Shrine of St. Rose Philippine Duchesne in St. Charles, Missouri.

Sister Frohlich is an associate professor at the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, where she teaches graduate courses in spirituality. She was one of twelve women from nine countries to make their final profession on July 1. Her path to final vows was far from straight. It began in a different community of women religious and took more than thirty years, ten in the Society of the Sacred Heart.

"What I saw in the Religious of the Sacred Heart was a joyful contemplative life, a loving community life and a passionate commitment to being educators and scholars. ... I am part of a long and deep tradition of spirituality that nourishes me on spiritual, emotional and intellectual levels. I belong to an international community that challenges and enriches me with different languages, cultures and ways of thinking and being."

Sister Mousseau's vow ceremony took place on the first day of the U.S. Provincial Assembly, which allowed more than 200 RSCJ to attend. Provincial Paula Toner, RSCJ, received Sister Mousseau's vows on behalf of the Society and later sent her on her mission, to teach at Aquinas Institute of Theology in St. Louis.

As a religious professed of temporary vows, Sister Mousseau now enters a period in which she will serve in an apostolic ministry while she deepens her life with Christ and her understanding of the mission of the Society. She can anticipate making her final profession in approximately six years. ❖



Superior General Kathleen Conan (left) receives Mary Frohlich's final vows at a ceremony in Rome.



Juliet Mousseau makes her first vows at the Shrine of St. Philippine Duchesne in St. Charles as Gina Rodee, RSCJ, and James Voiss, SJ, look on.



A new provincial team

A new provincial leadership team of (left to right) Sisters Sheila Hammond, Diana Wall, Provincial Barbara Dawson and Meg Causey began a three-year term on August 1.



New wineskins for new wine

The kaleidoscopes awaited them with the promise of beautiful things. When the seventy participants of the 2012 International Formation Meeting in Guadalajara, Mexico, arrived at their tables this summer, each found a kaleidoscope at her place. The prisms represented a willingness to find the beauty in change and an opportunity to create something beautiful through one's own actions. They were a symbol of the formation ministry in which each participant is involved, a ministry that affects not only the new members of the Society of the Sacred Heart, but, through them, the future of the Society and its impact in the world.

"The spirit of the International Formation Meeting was the palpable presence of the hope and fidelity of our sisters to God and the desire to live faithful lives in the realities of our world," said Stephany Veluz, RSCJ. "Our *cor unum* was lived fully in the gathering in the midst of diverse culture."

In religious life, formation is the process of exploring and experiencing the life and mission of a religious community. A process of deepening one's relationship with God and with the community, it is important not just in the initial stages of membership, but throughout life.

"While we were at the conference to learn and share about initial formation, it was clear to us that 'formation is for mission and it is for life,'" said Sheila Hammond, RSCJ, the U.S. provincial team member responsible for formation. "All of us are in formation, not only our newer members. What is essential for newer members is the call for all of us: growth in our community life, attention to our interior life and the balance of the contemplative apostolic dimension of our lives, deepening our understanding of the vow of poverty, and ongoing reflection on our sense of Church."

The meeting – the first Society-wide formation meeting since 1992 – used the parable of the wineskins (found in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke) as its theme. Georgina



Religious of the Sacred Heart representing twenty-one provinces gathered in Guadalajara, Mexico, for an International Formation Meeting, the first in twenty years.

Zubiria, RSCJ, of Mexico, encouraged participants to share their regional experiences and gave her vision of religious life in today's world. Patricia García de Quevedo, RSCJ, of Mexico, reviewed the Society's past formation experiences before Mariola Lopez, RSCJ, from Spain, shifted the focus to the future. Participants spent considerable time discussing concrete ways to live the charism and mission of the Society of the Sacred Heart fully and with passion.

Ellen Collesano, RSCJ, who serves full-time in Rome preparing members for final profession, said of the meeting, "There was so much positive energy and hope for the future. I was deeply touched by the spirit of unity in the group about the most essential elements of our charism and our life. There is a clarity about who we are as Religious of the Sacred Heart. Truly, we are in mission for life – together."

Other members of the United States Province in attendance were Kim King and Margaret Phelan, who served as translators; Kathy McGrath, who was on the planning team, and Kathleen Conan, superior general. ❖

In Mission for Life

The Fantastic Journey

By Shirley Miller, RSCJ



Barbara Lopiccio, left, admissions director at Academy of the Sacred Heart, Bloomfield Hills and Vice President of AMASC, greets Tom and Patricia Kolojeski, hosts for the AASH Regional Conference in Grosse Pointe.



Bloomfield Hills alumnae Barbara Price (left) and Carolyn Price are not related, but are sisters in the Heart! Now retired, Carolyn taught Barbara, currently the administrative assistant to the director of building and grounds at Bloomfield.

F

ive brief years ago, the Religious of the Sacred Heart embarked on an historical journey, one we had not traveled before. It was a pilgrimage of faith all across our beautiful country – through the mountains and the prairies to the oceans white with foam.

We could write a travelogue, complete with photos and quotations, maps and trip-tiks, GPS and Google searches, interstates and country roads, rest stops and final destinations. The story is populated with thousands of individuals – associates, alumnae and alumni, Network schools, friends, families, colleagues, retirement centers and Religious of the Sacred Heart, all engaged in and committed to the spiritual and educational mission of the Society of the Sacred Heart.

The journey has been called *In Mission for Life*. The name of the campaign was adopted from the Society's *Constitutions* (§35), which invite all RSCJ, whether in active ministry or the ministry of prayer and presence, from the youngest to the eldest, to live out our mission to the end.

These years have been blessed with epiphany after epiphany, revelation after revelation of God's love shown forth in your faithful and faith-filled friendships. It has been a journey of reconciliation, of hope, of sharing joys and sorrows, of deepening our commitment to making known the revelation of God's love, "whose source and symbol is for us the Heart of Christ."

The campaign goal is to raise \$40,000,000 over five years for the present and future mission of the Society in response to the needs of the Church and the world and the care of our elderly members. But the underlying goal has been the renewal of relationships, the heart and soul of St. Madeleine Sophie's gift to the Church and to all of us. We have heard over and over again, "God is not finished with the Society of the Sacred Heart. Sacred Heart is needed in the world more than ever today."



John and Rosemary Croghan joined Woodlands Academy friends to learn more about the *In Mission for Life* Campaign.



Woodlands Academy welcomed back former head Fran de la Chapelle, RSCJ. Left to right in back: Jack Curran, Sister de la Chapelle, Val Curran, Denise Hickey, Head of School Gerald Grossman. Susan Kennedy is in front.

And so the large family of the Sacred Heart (45,000 alumnae/i, 11,000 students annually in Sacred Heart schools, approximately 22,000 parents, 2000 faculty and staff, 500 trustees, 130 associates, 1000 Children of Mary and 330 RSCJ) continues to carry out the great mission entrusted to us in France 212 years ago and carried across the sea by Philippine and her companions almost 200 years ago.

Although there are fewer RSCJ today than in the past, the new wine of hundreds of thousands of lay colleagues has burst the old wineskins, resulting in a better vintage for the future.

Thank you for being on the road with the RSCJ, for sharing your lives so fully with us and for inviting us to share in your lives. We embrace your friendship and your gifts humbly and gratefully, as we live more deeply the motto that has guided us our entire lives, *cor unum et anima una in Corde Jesu* (one heart and one mind in the Heart of Jesus).

In the spring issue of HEART, we announced that we had received \$33,500,000 in gifts and pledges and had miles to go before we sleep. Six months later, we tell you that we have received \$37,000,000. Now, the miles have been transformed into blocks, as the journey continues... ❖

As you finalize your giving for 2012, please consider a gift to the Society of the Sacred Heart. Cash gifts may be returned in the envelope included in this issue of *Heart* – just note that your gift is to help complete the *In Mission for Life* campaign. Email me at smiller@rscj.org if you prefer to make a gift of securities or if you have questions. We also offer online giving at our web site: www.rscj.org.

Thank you

Corrections

The mission advancement office staff regrets that the following tribute gifts were omitted from the 2012 annual report:

Gifts received in memory of:

- Kathleen M. Adams from Alison Adams Winter
- George Baldwin and James Neroni from Barbara and Peter Neroni
- Lewis Falk from Jo H. Falk
- Muriel Heide from Joan R. Challinor
- Suzanne C. Horstmann from Karen and Tony Kamerick
- Claire R. Horton from John Mosby Russell
- Susan C. Mullen from Emily C. Donahue
- Sally S. Prince from Patricia Prince
- Martha Toner from the Network of Sacred Heart Schools

Gifts received in honor of:

- Margaret M. Canty, RSCJ, from Nancy Brouillard McKenzie
- Anne Dyer, RSCJ, from the Network of Sacred Heart Schools
- Mary Mardel, RSCJ, from Kathy Fortier
- Tina L. Niemann from Ginger and John Niemann



In Memoriam

Please see www.rscj.org for profiles of RSCJ who have died. May they rejoice in the company of the saints.

Elizabeth Hunter, RSCJ
May 9, 2012

M. Malin Craig, RSCJ
August 20, 2012

Yvonne Pometti, RSCJ
August 26, 2012

Anne Montgomery, RSCJ
August 27, 2012

Melba Inés Giraldo, RSCJ
September 2, 2012

Claude Demoustier, RSCJ
September 2, 2012

Maribeth Tobin, RSCJ
September 9, 2012

Anita Villeré, RSCJ
September 19, 2012

Mary Sutherland, RSCJ
September 30, 2012

Rosenda Mesa, RSCJ
October 13, 2012

Ida Rinne, RSCJ
October 18, 2012

Mary Bush, RSCJ
November 10, 2012

Catherine Henry, RSCJ
November 12, 2012

Marina Mapa, RSCJ
November 18, 2012

New Relationships for U.S. and Canadian Provinces in 2013

Last July, following a three-year-long discernment process, the twenty-two members of the Canadian Province of the Society of the Sacred Heart made the unanimous, courageous decision to join with the U.S. Province in a new relationship. Within weeks, four Canadian RSCJ participated in the U.S. Provincial Assembly in St. Louis, where they shared the desire of the Canadian Province to become one with the U.S. Province. It was a very powerful moment when the U.S. RSCJ received this message with overwhelming welcome and support for forming a new province together. The unification of the two provinces will be complete by the end of July, 2013. Other important details – including the name of the province come August 1 – remain to be determined.

U.S. Provincial Barbara Dawson, RSCJ, will be the provincial of the new province, and she will gain a Canadian team member to support her leadership in Canada. “The central element of our new province is mission,” she wrote to RSCJ in both provinces. “We believe that this new relationship will support the future of the RSCJ mission in Canada and the U.S. We have listened deeply to each other and to the Spirit and have arrived at every decision through consensus.”

A pair of committees is working through the details of this new union. The Dialogue Committee, comprised of Sisters Bridget Bearss, Barbara Dawson and Melanie Guste from the United States and Sisters Anne-Marie Conn, Donna Dolan and Mary Finlayson (provincial) from Canada, is charged with creating a plan. The Finance/Legal Committee, made up of Sisters Mary-Ann Bates, Sally McLean and lay staff member Danielle Dunleavy of Canada, and Sisters Marina Hernandez and Maureen O’Halloran of the U.S., will deal with the many financial, legal and canonical aspects of this new relationship. It will be the work of these committees to create a plan that eases the transitions for the RSCJ, including in areas of leadership, finances, apostolic ministry, care of the elderly and formation. An *ad experimentum* plan covering the years 2013-2015, will be presented to the general council in Rome this spring.

“This is an exciting new chapter in the story of both provinces, offering the possibilities of new life and the broadening of horizons,” wrote Kathleen Conan, RSCJ, superior general of the Society of the Sacred Heart. ✦



Dialogue: Listening to the Heartbeat of God in the Other

By Gerardette Philips, RSCJ (Indonesia)

IN RECENT YEARS, people in different parts of the world, especially those inhabited by people of mixed cultures and faiths, see the serious need for interreligious and intercultural dialogue, but are not sure where to begin. I have often been asked, “How do you initiate a dialogue with others? How as a Christian woman religious are you able to begin a dialogue with Muslims? Where do you start? Is this dialogue possible? Are you not afraid? Isn’t it a waste of time?”

I believe that the first thing we have to do is to keep our hearts open. The open heart will create in us a reverence for another tradition. We can no longer utter mutual condemnations, because how we deal with one another, how we listen to the heartbeat of God in the other, is a significant moment in our journey toward God.

In genuine dialogue, we touch the divine depths in the tradition of our dialogue partner, as well as our own tradition. Surely one of the signs of this kind of dialogue is when both participants come away aware that their contact with God’s presence in another faith tradition brings them closer to God’s presence in their own faith tradition. I do not come away from meeting my Muslim friends less of a Catholic, less of an RSCJ. Instead, I am enriched in my Catholic faith through the lives of faithful Muslims. In the submission to the all-merciful and all-compassionate God of Islam, I encounter the key features of Christian discipleship: obedience, faith, prayer, trust and love. I hope in turn, Muslims encounter the key features

of their faith through my life, that strives to live in the embrace of the love of the Heart of Jesus.

We know that Muslim and Christian worlds have known and, in some places, continue to face violent confrontations. It would be trivial to try to figure out who is more guilty in these conflicts. History should make us all a little more humble. The weight of this history may be why few approach Islam without strong feelings. We know that we cannot change the past, but we also know that we have a responsibility for how we live the present in order to offer a safe place for the future to unfold. I share with you this 'present' of mine in a country which is not Islamic, although it has the world's largest Muslim population. My relations with Muslims in Indonesia and India reveal that what is happening now reflects the best in our history.

*The quest of the human heart
for meaning is the heartbeat
of every religion.*

—David Steindl-Rast

I have specialized in Muslim-Christian dialogue for twenty-seven years, working to introduce Christians to Islam and Muslims to Christianity. For the past twelve years, I have served primarily in Indonesia, with once a year visits to India. Often these efforts take place in the formal educational settings of university, high school and seminaries, but more often in informal settings of seminars, workshops, discussion groups and retreats.

Love

For the past four years, we RSCJ in the Area of Indonesia have celebrated St. Madeleine Sophie's feast with an inter-faith event. One year we had the theme "Love in Islam and in Christianity." Our guests were Muslims and Christians we encounter every day; women, men and children were all present. I spoke about love in Islam and my Muslim colleague at the university spoke of love in Christianity. After our talks, we invited those present to gather in groups of about ten to share how they experienced and found meaning in the love of God in their lives. All shared, including the children of our little school. One of them said, "I know God loves me because my teacher smiles at me even when I am naughty." The scintillating sharing filled our community with much energy. The sharing went on over supper, on the way



Novice Lusni Sitanggagn (center) discusses the love of God with some Muslim friends.

home, and I heard later that the sharing continued in homes and at work the next days. This is what the awareness of God's love does to the human heart. It touches the depths where God is alive and gives meaning to all.

Forgiveness

In Indonesia, most of the time, Muslims and Christians hardly ever consider themselves different from each other. Life goes on with peace and respect. The need for dialogue is awakened when these peaceful waters are disturbed. Unfortunately or fortunately, this happens quite often. After Pope Benedict XVI's Regensburg lecture (in which he quoted a criticism of Islam made in the 14th century) there were questions, anger, disappointment and hostility. Students went to the streets in protest. The Islamic university where I teach was approached to send their students to join the protest and the rector said, "We will wait for the seminar by Ms. Gera – a consultant to the Pope (I was on the Pontifical Commission for Interreligious Dialogue at the time) and then we will make a decision. Until then our students will not join the protest."

The students of the universities that protested were invited to the seminar. It was a humble explanation of the lecture, with the understanding that no matter what anyone says, Muslims will be blessed. In the Quran, there are four groups of people that stand above all others. Those are the people upon whom God has bestowed His blessings, and Muslims, in their prayers, ask God to guide them towards the "Straight Path," the path that is blessed. The students who protested earlier now encouraged others not to do the same.



Gerardette Philips, RSCJ, (standing) enjoys the respectful interaction in her class of both Muslim and Christian students.

At about the same time, our cardinal did the most beautiful thing. I hope the story of it goes down in history. There was no immediate apology from Rome after the Regensburg address, and Cardinal Julius Darmaatmadja of Jakarta felt that it was needed to maintain the good relations between Indonesian Muslims and Catholics. Cardinal Darmaatmadja was to preside and give the keynote address at the installation of the president of the Indonesian Conference for Religion and Peace. On the stage our cardinal sat with the leaders of other religions on his right and left. Before he began his address, he asked his secretary to read the apology that he had written on behalf of the Catholic Church. After it was read, he knelt and asked pardon from the Muslim leader next to him. In a second, they both held each other asking for forgiveness. This left the people present in tears, and the hall remained silent for almost half an hour before the ceremony resumed. The Regensburg address, while it fermented anger in many parts of the world, prompted the hearts of believers in Indonesia to forgive and to love.

***“In making them better Muslims,
we become better Christians.”***

—St. Madeleine Sophie Barat

Trust

One of the courses that I teach in the Catholic University almost every semester is Catholicism. Most of the time, 60% of my students are Muslim, 25% Catholic and 15% Protestant. The course includes an exposure program in which students meet with people who struggle for their

livelihood. Last year during Holy Week, the Muslim students accompanied the Catholic students to understand better the mystery of the Passion of Christ. On Good Friday, the Muslim students enacted the Stations of the Cross at the university. They were helped by their Catholic friends who entrusted them with their story, their faith. I was amazed! Each station was in the context of their exposure program. Jesus condemned to death was a mother with her little girl who dances in the streets to get money to help her family. Jesus carrying His cross was a man who carries a weight of about 60 kilos as he goes around selling a traditional food. Jesus stripped of His garments was a mountain laid bare because of pollution. Mary receiving the body of Jesus was a young woman involved in social work with street children. The Resurrection of Jesus was the gathering of people of all faiths, cultures, race, work and suffering. They enacted the same thing in their mosque later that evening. In this attitude of trust *the students gave and received life from each other*. This has a positive effect not only on dialogue but on the whole life of the planet.

The recent film *The Innocence of Muslims* has called for dialogue between Muslims and Christians. It is heartening to witness the creative efforts taken by so many Muslims who are working with people of other faiths to help their fellow believers to respond peacefully rather than through violence. It is a time of educating both Muslims and Christians about the Prophet Mohammad. However, this will only be understood if Muslims and Christians truly take the trouble to enter into the Truth of their own religion and experience for themselves the Heart of God beating in tune with the Heart of the world. ❖



Gerardette Philips, RSCJ, PhD, mistress of novices for the Area of Indonesia, has taught in a Muslim and Catholic University in Indonesia since 2003. In 2005, she was appointed by Pope Benedict XVI to the Pontifical Council of Interreligious Dialogue as Consultor to the Commission for Religious Relations with Muslims.

Dialogue toward communion:

The lived experience in Sacred Heart Schools

“For the sake of one child, I would have founded the Society.”

Most of the Sacred Heart family is familiar with this quote from St. Madeleine Sophie Barat, but what is not commonly known is that what St. Madeleine Sophie really said was “For an Ofelia I would have founded the Society.” She was referring to an alumna of the school in Paris who had gone back to her native Mexico to preach the Gospel. A child’s country of origin was not important to Sophie. Nor was her religion, economic situation or skin color. Sophie recognized in all children, in all people, the face of her Beloved. And so it is today at the schools founded in Sophie’s tradition.

To achieve true dialogue one must accept without question the dignity of the other. Sacred Heart schools are Catholic, and yet most have a significant percentage of non-Catholic students. Why do we welcome those of other faith traditions? Quite simply, because we see the divine in each one.

We often think of diversity in terms of race, ethnicity, religion, even physical abilities, but Network schools also recognize the importance of economic diversity, and many are succeeding in their efforts to welcome students of all backgrounds. Some schools seek ways of creating more diversity – through financial aid programs, for instance – others achieve a breadth of diversity naturally, by attracting students from multi-cultural backgrounds. Consider the three schools in the Chicago area. Sacred Heart Schools, Sheridan Road, attracts students from diverse backgrounds, including families from thirty different nations. At Woodlands Academy, approximately forty percent of the student body now identify themselves as non-white. Josephinum Academy has a natural mix of students from different cultures, countries of origin and religions.

Sheridan Road

Students of color make up approximately 24% of the population of Sacred Heart Schools (SHS), Sheridan Road. A surprising 11% of students were born outside the United States or have at least one parent born outside the U.S. Twenty-five languages other than English are spoken in students’ homes. Celebrating this diversity is important to the school community, says Head of School Nat Wilburn, and the school has instituted several programs to invite inter-cultural, inter-religious dialogue.

The Poetry Pals program brings together children from diverse and interfaith communities for creative expression and friendship through poetry, music and art. SHS fourth graders meet with counterparts from a Muslim school and a Jewish school, with each school hosting one session. The children spend time together, share their cultural experiences, and write and perform their own poems, usually about faith-related topics. “Poetry becomes the vehicle that leads to dialogue about customs, beliefs, clothing and language,” Mr. Wilburn said. “Rather than a sense of fear about visiting an unfamiliar place, the students approach it with excitement, because they know these students. They are becoming friends.”

Sponsored by the Diversity Council, SHS StoryCorps seeks to provide Sacred Heart families of all backgrounds and beliefs the opportunity to share their family stories with the Sacred Heart community. Several times each year, SHS families discuss the beauty and challenges of being a “minority” in a well-intentioned but sometimes not-so-graceful world. They share what the experience has meant in their lives as well as in the context of being in the SHS community.

The annual International Night is all about celebrating the diversity of the cultural backgrounds of the student body. The Sheridan Road building becomes a global village, with opportunities to experience ethnic cuisines, traditional costumes and a “Parade of Nations,” showcasing the native attire of students and their families.

Yuan-Qing Yu is from Shanghai. Her husband, Ron Mui, is from Hong Kong. They chose Sacred Heart Schools for their children because of the emphasis on values, as expressed

At Woodlands Academy's annual Mass of the Holy Spirit, junior Maria Urquiza carries the flag of Mexico, the country of her birth.



Sacred Heart Schools, Sheridan Road, fourth graders spend time with students from a Jewish school and a Muslim school while learning to express themselves creatively.

through the Goals and Criteria. Mr. Mui said, "It is not just one thing; it's a frame of mind. They create an environment where we wanted our children to be educated. To paraphrase Confucius, a person who has made 100 bows a day would not have the frame of mind to treat others without dignity. In walking the hallways of Sacred Heart, one gets the sense that the children treat each other with the dignity that comes from bowing to each other 100 times a day."

Sheridan Road also receives high marks from Mr. Mui for the way it promotes respect for those from less wealthy homes or those who have a physical disability. "We see the importance of donations to the school to fund scholarships so that the school can maintain economic diversity among its students," he said. "SHS involvement with Misericordia (a local residential community for people with developmental disabilities) is one way that the school has taught our children to treat with dignity those born with handicaps."

Woodlands Academy

The chapel at Woodlands Academy features a display of twenty-five flags of different nations. Each flag represents the country of birth or the country in which a member of the school community holds dual citizenship. In the boarding school, students from China, Mexico, and the Bahamas share both academic and residential life. Exchange students from Sacred Heart schools around the world are enthusiastically welcomed every year.

In one of the high-traffic hallways of Woodlands Academy, you will find the Diversity Days Calendar. Each month it features photos and information marking cultural celebrations such as Guy Fawkes Day and the Chinese Festival of Lanterns, religious feasts such as Yom Kippur and Diwali (the Hindu Feast of Lights), and days of international significance such as World Water Day and International Women's Day.

Common Ground, a student organization at Woodlands, promotes a spirit of awareness and appreciation for community and diversity. In recent years Common Ground has sponsored the Blue Eyes Brown Eyes anti-racism experience, a Religious Panel of Women in the Clergy and Cultural Odyssey, a day of ethnic foods, traditions, and dress. Both Common Ground and Campus Ministry sponsor an annual visit by the gospel choir at St. Malachy School, from an economically depressed section of Chicago. Following a spirited liturgy, St. Malachy students enjoy lunch, special projects, a talent show and carnival games run by Woodlands girls.

While the majority of Woodlands families identify themselves as Roman Catholic, Woodlands is blessed to have families of various Christian traditions as well as non-Christian, including Jewish, Sikh, Buddhist and Muslim. The school community celebrates all people on the journey to find the Holy in their lives. Every other year, Woodlands' Campus Ministry plans an interfaith prayer service at which clergy from various religious traditions express a common petition.

International Night at Sheridan Road lets students and families show off their cultural traditions.



Photo by Marc Harris

Josephinum senior Mayra Caballero receives her diploma from Josephinum Principal Lourdes Weber (right) this past June. Josephinum Board Chair Juliette Lane and President Michael Dougherty help to celebrate the happy event.

Peace was a recent theme, and an imam, a rabbi, a Protestant minister and a Catholic priest all prayed according to their traditions.

“The statue of the Sacred Heart is the perfect reminder to each of us that we are a welcoming community,” said Head of School Gerald Grossman. “The Sacred Heart of Jesus requires no passports, identity checks or membership authentications. Instead, all are full members of the Sacred Heart! Arms extended, heart open and loving, each of us is called to be that loving heart in the world.”

Josephinum Academy

Just by chance, a visitor to a French class observed Josephinum Academy students practicing how to identify themselves by nationality. While there were several who stated, “Je suis Américaine,” others reported being from Puerto Rico, Mexico, Congo and Burma. “We are a majority of minorities,” is the way Head of School Michael Dougherty describes his school, where Puerto Ricans make up the largest share of the population. “We promote a shared appreciation of the richness of where the students come from, which leads to a strong sense of who they are.”

The majority of Josephinum’s students are from low-income households. The Jo, as the school is familiarly known, does not have a diversity coordinator, and it does not consider ethnicity during the admissions process. Instead the cultural mix is a natural result of the school’s implicit mission to provide a Sacred Heart education to young women who might not otherwise have the opportunity.

The international flavor in the hallways of Josephinum is intentional. In addition to the students naturally attracted to

the school and the ethnically diverse faculty and staff, the school works with other organizations to recruit students from refugee families. “These families bring a commitment to education that the rest of our community finds inspiring and uplifting,” Mr. Dougherty remarks.

Principal Lourdes Weber, herself a Mexican American, notes that the Goals and Criteria of Sacred Heart Schools promote appreciation and respect for others. Through the school’s occasional service days, the girls recognize their own strengths, as well as those of their friends. Through events like Latina Month and African American Month, as well as prayer services with different religious leaders, the girls at the Jo learn not about “others,” but about their friends and classmates. “Every day we are about appreciating our own backgrounds and learning from each other,” Ms. Weber says.

“At Josephinum, the gift our students bring is the permission to be ourselves,” Mr. Dougherty says. “The Jo is a bridge of understanding, a place of encounter where the girls know they are safe and respected. We let go of the ‘shoulds’ and accept who we are.” ❖



The three schools in Chicago are models of the celebration of diversity in Sacred Heart schools. With St. Madeleine Sophie’s example and the Goals and Criteria as guides, all twenty-two Network schools in the U.S. recognize the unique value of each child entrusted to them and strive to instill that same respect and appreciation in the students. *(With thanks to contributing writers Diane Fallon and Mary Ryan.)*

From meeting to dialogue, giving birth to new life

By Mirasol Navidad, RSCJ (Philippines)

WHEN I LEFT THE PHILIPPINES IN JULY TO participate in the U.S. Province Assembly and the International Formation Meeting in Mexico, I carried just one thing with me: the challenge to simply learn to listen. Indeed, listening created space in me for greater openness and receptivity. Being plunged into the realities and situations of the U.S. Province and of the Society in relation to formation – realities far bigger than those of my small district – created a new consciousness of our having a common mission regardless of our many differences in cultures and realities: “to discover and reveal his love.”

At the U.S. assembly, in all the round table discussions, presentations from the outgoing and incoming provincial teams, as well as the sharing from guests, I found concrete manifestations that the reality of internationality permeates our relationships, that we are but one body. More than the “differences” that I could have highlighted in my participation, I was drawn to appreciate the challenge to live communion and to celebrate our *cor unum*. Hence, my interaction with my sisters was one of mutual learning and mutual enrichment. I neither felt different nor was I treated differently. I felt heard, welcomed and valued. (*General Chapter 2000*).

These words from Exodus 3:5 became real to me: “*Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.*” It was an experience of seeing “the world in the Heart of God and the Heart of God in the world,” as another RSCJ put it so beautifully. It also changed my vantage point from “they” to “we.” This experience became for me part of what it means to live internationality, which is good news. Reflecting further, I find resonance in what Alison Healy wrote in the issue of *Connections* on inculturation: “*It is out of our culture that our sense of our own identity comes.*”¹ This rootedness in one’s own identity is enriched whenever it interweaves with other cultures in a deep experience of dialogue.

I proceeded from the assembly to Guadalajara for the International Formation Meeting. What was greatly and unanimously affirmed in the meeting was that “Community life is a fundamental expression of our spirituality. And that community *is* mission and it is *for* mission.” (*Gen. Chap. 2008*).

Community indeed is a privileged place where formation happens at every stage of religious life. Hence, in this age of globalization, when modern means of communication are reducing the boundaries between peoples and cultures, a new generation of RSCJ must recognize that to live internationality means to transcend the boundaries of races and cultures so as to respond with Christ’s unlimited love to the challenge of globalization.

The International Formation Meeting in Guadalajara was a celebration of our differences and commonalities, of our life as RSCJ rooted “in prayer and the interior life.” It was an affirmation of our deep conviction that his Heart is the symbol and source of our love. Everyone left Guadalajara with “the water jars” filled to the brim. Being renewed in the fundamentals of our life as RSCJ was for all a very enriching experience. ❖

1. Alison Healy, *Connections: Toward a Global Consciousness* (Vol. 3 No. 1, 1993), p.12.

Sol Navidad, RSCJ, (left) with Regine Pamene, RSCJ, of Congo, at the International Formation Meeting in Guadalajara in July.



Called to become one body in Christ



St. Madeleine Sophie Barat had a simple and profound desire: to reveal the love of Christ's Heart to as many of his children as possible. Just eighteen years after its founding, the Society of the Sacred Heart became an international organization when Rose Philippine Duchesne and her companions journeyed to the wilds of Missouri. The early Religious of the Sacred Heart did not, would not, let political boundaries stand in their way, and neither do today's RSCJ. Internationality, so much a part of the Society of the Sacred Heart throughout its history, may prove to be one of the defining characteristics of its future.

Internationality – living without borders – requires openness, mutual respect, an acceptance of differences and an attempt at understanding those differences through dialogue. The ease of travel and communications – email, Skype, Facebook – makes relationships across borders logistically easier than in Sophie's day; and these relationships create connectedness. In the words of Lisa Buscher, RSCJ, "I am no longer able to see a country as simply a place – rather it is home to my sister and friend. It humanizes our world; it reminds us that we are innately connected to one another."

Religious of the Sacred Heart consider themselves members of one international community. This unity is important to RSCJ; the words *cor unum et anima una in Corde Jesu* (one heart and one mind in the Heart of Jesus) appear on the cross each wears. Former Superior General Clare



Donna Collins, RSCJ, (center) with the general secretariat staff at the mother house in Rome. Francesca Micucci from Italy is on the left and Sandra Bossio from Peru is on the right. Both help with the translations of Society documents.



Daphne Sequeira, RSCJ, directs the Province of India's Center for Women's Development.

Pratt, RSCJ, said, "It is extraordinary that we have stayed one over these 212 years. I believe it was Sophie's long influence. She was so relational, such a steady creator of union."

Probation

From the days of St. Madeleine Sophie, every Religious of the Sacred Heart has enjoyed a period of preparation for final profession – termed probation – during which she joins an international group to pray, share and reflect. The five-month period of probation is intense and bonding. RSCJ tend to stay in touch with those from their probation group. Currently, the U.S. province has two women in probation in Rome: Elisabeth Brinkmann, RSCJ, and Lisa Buscher, RSCJ. The eleven women in their probation group come from seven provinces and eight countries.

"I have always seen myself belonging to the world community of RSCJ," Sister Buscher says. "In my first week of novitiate, I remember sitting around the dinner table with my RSCJ sisters – from Cuba, France, Spain, Canada and the U.S. I was filled with awe and gratitude and felt at that moment the world had come through our door and was sitting at our dinner table! This internationality is one of the things that drew me to the Society, for I had dreamed about doing something larger than myself, co-creating with God and others beyond the United States."

Service

The Society's internationality creates an openness to serve where needed, and the interaction between provinces is constant. Frequently, when preparing for a new ministry, RSCJ will travel to another province to observe and learn from those already serving in that field. International service is required during formation, and every member of the Society must learn one of the Society's three "official" languages: French, English or Spanish. This generally requires an assignment of several months in another country to hone language skills. Currently eight RSCJ from other countries live in the U.S., several of whom are here specifically to fine-tune their English.

Reyna Gonzalez, RSCJ, first came to the United States to refine her English. A member of the Mexican province, she has now served in the U.S. for two and a half years. Committed to popular education projects, she and Imma De Stefanis, RSCJ, founded Sherpa Educational Consulting to work with schools and small non-profits that serve immigrants and young people. They also founded the Sacred Heart International Service Project. Sponsored jointly by the U.S. and Mexican provinces, the Sacred Heart International Service Project integrates service and leadership training. In the past ten years, 140 participants from eleven countries have served women and children in Haiti, the United States and Mexico. In short, Sister Gonzalez lives internationality every day.

"I think living internationally is more than crossing borders," Sister Gonzalez says. "It is crossing psychological and emotional lines that allows me to rethink and reinterpret our identity ... It is how I let myself be changed ... by the presence of another."

Fifteen U.S. RSCJ are currently serving in other countries. Some, like Sister Nance O'Neil in Indonesia or Sister Carlota Duarte in Mexico, have ministered outside the U.S. for more



Sisters Helen O'Regan (left) and Sally Rude both served many years outside the United States. Here they participate in the 50th Jubilee of the Uganda/Kenya Province.



Sisters Lisa Buscher, of the U.S. Province, and Irene Franco, of the Mexico Province, enjoyed the beauty of Assisi, Italy, during their preparation for final vows.

than two decades. Shell Olson has been in Japan for thirteen years. While several long-time missionaries returned to the U.S. this year – Judy Vollbrecht from Haiti, Helen O'Regan and Connie Dryden from Africa – others have departed in recent years: Nancy Koke and Paula Gruner are both in the Uganda/Kenya Province and Nancy Murphy is in Indonesia. Several U.S. RSCJ are in Rome as part of the Society's administration, including Superior General Kathleen Conan and Archivist Margaret Phelan. Finally, Anne Wachter, RSCJ, now leads Sacred Heart School in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Donna Collins, RSCJ, was born in Australia, is a member of the U.S. Province and is currently serving in Rome. Whether through ministry or meetings, she has visited or lived in nearly half of the 41 countries in which the Society is located. During one of her stays in Rome, her community had members from Spain, England, Argentina, Korea, Japan, Brazil, Colombia and Chile, all involved in service to the international Society. With each experience, she said, "My own horizons kept being stretched and in each place, I met sisters living out the same mission within very different cultural contexts."

Earlier this year, an international noviceship was created with novices from the provinces of Chile, Peru and Mexico. Before the end of next year, RSCJ from the United States will be part of an international province (see article on page 8). Maria del Socorro Rubio, RSCJ, of Mexico, will soon be joining the general council in Rome. Before leaving, she spent some time in the United States to improve her English. She commented about her experiences, "Once you leave your own country, you develop an international heart."

Internationality. Unity. *Cor unum*. In the Society of the Sacred Heart, they are very much the same experience. With it comes trust, acceptance, growth, joy ... and the confidence and strength to continue Sophie's mission. ✦

Each place, each smile, each tear – holy ground

Sara Ann (Sally) Rude, RSCJ

My three years in Hungary passed so quickly. In the twenty years since I left Grand Coteau, I have served in very diverse places – Rome, Uganda, Wales, Chicago, Indonesia, Hungary and now Joigny, France. Each has added its own color and depth to the heart I take to the next place.

First, a little about Hungary. This land of the Magyars is east of Austria in the Carpathian Basin; it is now about the size of Indiana, with a population of just under ten million. Hungarians know and share their long history as though all happened yesterday. Although the Communist era ended more than twenty years ago, its influence lingers in ugly apartment blocks in poor repair, abandoned factories, crumbling buildings, stalled economic recovery, fragile hope. Yet Budapest on the Danube is beautiful still, as are the resort areas around Lake Balaton, the flower-filled villages, onion-domed churches, monasteries, castles, vistas of plains and mountains. Hungarians are a warm, cultured, gracious people who love music, literature, family and their traditions.

In 2009 I was asked to join three Hungarian RSCJ as we began work in the Fenyi Gyula Jesuit school (grades 5-12) in Miskolc in northeastern Hungary, the only Jesuit school of its kind in the country. As I said goodbye in early September to eleven English classes I had taught – about 200 students –

several asked what I loved most in Hungary. I could truthfully answer that I loved my experience with them, the students, the most. Of course I also loved the food, the wine, the music, the dancing, the colorful crafts, the people who were so gracious to me, the fine school, our community, the view from our home of the Bukk Mountains that in winter reminded me of a Breugel painting, and more. But I loved most being with these talented young people who are the hope of Hungary. Their discussions were often insightful and deep. So often our conversations went far beyond whatever the topic of the day might be.

I am deeply grateful for their trust and their openness as they shared heart stories, what they loved, their dreams, their families. One student began our tutorial sessions wanting to discuss assigned topics that would be on the national English exam. His favorite was the section on weather, although his own interest is mainly history. The suggested questions were quite uninteresting, so we would quickly veer off into other subjects. At the end he would thank me for our “weather discussion,” which was rarely about weather. He did very well on his national English exam anyway.



At a recent meeting with another graduate, we both recalled our first tutorial session three years ago when he asked a question that I couldn't answer, so I suggested we look it up on the Internet and talk about it next time. With a smile, this then fifteen-year-old said in good English, "Sister Sally, an old Greek once said that it's a wise person that knows what he doesn't know." I responded that I thought that old Greek's name was Socrates. Last Christmas he gave me a small book in Hungarian of charming short stories related to biblical texts. He, my classes, and my Hungarian teacher have helped me translate them into English, and of course there's been much discussion. After a summer working with a microfinancing project in India, he left in late September to study economics and management at a British university.

Five bright 11th and 12th grade women are on exchange in Sacred Heart schools in the U.S. for the beginning of this school year. One thanked me for our tutorial sessions and "life and God talks" by giving me twenty-seven of her favorite Bible quotations. Another bright young friend gave me John Grisham novels when he finished reading them – in English! He began doing this when he came in Year 9. Discussion of novels led easily and naturally to deeper discussions as well. So many conversations were truly "dialogue toward communion." Small wonder that these young people were what I loved most about Hungary. Some will stay in touch, most will not, but all touched me deeply.

I regret that I never learned Hungarian well, a loved treasure in this country where many speak more than one language. I listened to a great deal of Hungarian that I did not understand: lunch table conversations, movies, evening news, homilies, random conversations on the street, in buses, in shops. Over time I learned to be comfortable with this, and it carved a kind of receptive silence in me. So many made the effort to speak English with me, especially my community and colleagues,

and, of course, my students. It is right and just that in France I make the same effort to speak a language not my own, well beyond my own comfort zone.

I know more deeply now that language is far more than grammar and vocabulary. We say things differently because we think differently in subtle but real ways: the obligatory initial greeting in Uganda, the always capitalized "Anda" "You" in Bahasa Indonesia, the grammatical and phonetic precision of the unique and musical Hungarian language. Our cultures and histories highlight different facets of our common human experience and values, and our languages reflect this. I'm beginning to develop a sensitivity to this. I am reluctant to say easily that I understand, but I know I want to be open to what the other wants to share. That does make a difference.

There is a symmetry in setting forth from the land of Philippine in Louisiana, and now, after quite a journey, being in Sophie's home in Joigny, "far beyond anything I could ask for or imagine." I have experienced a God-consciousness expressed in culturally unique ways during these twenty years in Africa, Asia, America and Europe. The people of each place, in their own way, let me walk with them as they shared their daily lives, their joys and their sorrows, their selves. Truly, the Lord was in each place, each smile, each tear – holy ground indeed. "This is My Body. Amen." ❖



Sara Ann (Sally) Rude, RSCJ, recently moved to Joigny, France to serve at the spirituality center and welcome pilgrims to St. Madeleine Sophie's home. She has also served in Hungary, Uganda/Kenya, Indonesia and Rome. Her most recent ministries in the United States were at Josephinum Academy and the Academy of the Sacred Heart, Grand Coteau. Earlier in her ministry, she also served at the Convent of the Sacred Heart (91st Street), and Schools of the Sacred Heart (Atherton).

Landscape of Lake Balaton, Tihany, Hungary.

The spirituality of dialogue

By Donna Dolan, RSCJ

Daniel O’Leary, a frequent contributor to *The Tablet*, says that “words transform us. Beautiful words redeem our spirit. They find their way into places of hurt within us and heal them. They slip past the sentries of the mind. They are the kisses of the soul. They enter our bodies like Holy Communion and then they do their fertile work. We live our days differently when we carry living words inside us.”¹

We find a beautiful illustration of this in John’s gospel in the conversation of the Samaritan woman with Jesus. He enters the story worn out, fragile. His mind is tired as he stops at the well. As the dialogue unfolds, we meet a woman who is “coming to see.” Jesus speaks very softly, words she was probably longing to hear – about the mystery of living water and its power to rejuvenate life. As we listen to the dialogue, we note how Jesus has touched the woman’s mind, touched her heart, touched her being. He has offered her truth in a simple, compassionate way. Moved by his mysterious dignity and by his peaceful presence, she has put aside her point of view. Now the Spirit wells up within her. The dialogue has moved them into communion; as the drama unfolds we are invited into and engaged in the spirituality of their dialogue.



Rosa Vázquez, RSCJ

Living words shape our lives in many ways. Conversations shape us and create our futures. Over the past three years, because of our declining numbers, the Canadian Province, with Jane Maltby, RSCJ, as our facilitator, has met for serious conversations that have moved us to take responsibility for our future. Despite all odds, what choices could each one make to create a new future? What would each one be willing to let go of, and what would each one want to take forward? To enter effectively into a spirituality of dialogue each one had to be willing to set aside her point of view and listen deeply. After each session, Jane offered the following questions for our personal reflection:

- What happened?
- How did I feel?
- What did I learn?
- Are there any next steps for me?

Was there any dialogue, or was I holding to my own point of view? Our point of view can sometimes be narrow. Often it comes from the past, our parents, our culture, our reading, our experience. Other people bring other points of view, which often enlarge the dialogue. When we listen to one another, conversation happens and conflict begins to be eroded. Communion happens in the listening, leading us to a more authentic spirituality of dialogue.

At the present moment, we have a Dialogue Committee made up of some members of the United States Province and the Canadian Province. Together we are coming to see new opportunities for partnership, new levels of consciousness and a more authentic relationship as RSCJ in the USA and Canada, as we move toward the creation of a new province. To date, the Dialogue Committee has had only two face to face meetings. At one of our sessions, we discussed the current polarities in the church and the seemingly sad overthrow of Vatican II. Staying with that point of view could have taken us down a weary and dreary road. However, one of our committee offered a more authentic vision, focusing on our charism in the modern world.

Together we are coming to see new opportunities for partnership, new levels of consciousness and a more authentic relationship as RSCJ.

Is it relevant? Yes. Is the world of today hungering for the love of Jesus, “his words, his attitudes, his relationship with people, his way of relating to all created things?”² Yes. Does it make a difference to the way we want to be as RSCJ? What are the gifts and riches, the calls and the hopes embodied in our charism, handed on to us by Madeleine Sophie Barat?

It is easy to stir up emotions when we look at our church today but perhaps more difficult to stir up our wills. We are going through a period of history when being a Catholic or a member of a religious order takes a lot of will. A spirituality of dialogue characterized by commitment of will as well as feeling moves us beyond “the sentries of the mind” to involvement in real ways with other people and all created things. In the encounter with the Samaritan woman we meet Jesus. In that scene he appears gentle. Weary. But his will is strong, as strong as it is in other encounters when we meet him as stern, dismissive, challenging or demanding accountability of us.

The spirituality of dialogue is a dance of spiritual moves where each partner in the dialogue relies on the other to complete the steps, the beautiful moves that “do their fertile work and redeem our spirit.” ✦

1. “Poetry Please,” article by Daniel O’Leary in *The Tablet*, April 7, 2012.
2. *Constitutions of the Society of the Sacred Heart*, §19

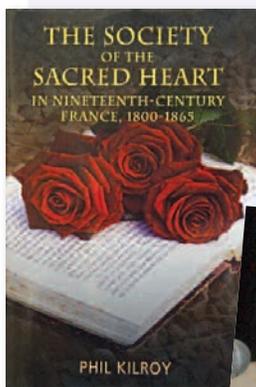


Donna Dolan, RSCJ, is a member of the Canadian Province. She has recently moved from Prince George, British Columbia, to Halifax, Nova Scotia. Her ministries include nursing, education, retreats and spiritual direction, as well as training in grief and trauma ministry.

Two new books bring St. Madeleine Sophie Barat to life

Two new books about St. Madeleine Sophie Barat and the early days of the Society of the Sacred Heart reached booksellers this year. Penned by two highly respected women within the family of the Sacred Heart, Phil Kilroy, RSCJ, and Atherton faculty member Connie Solari, the two books are of different genres, but remarkably complementary.

Sister Phil Kilroy wrote the definitive biography of St. Madeleine Sophie, *Madeleine Sophie Barat: A Life* (Cork University Press, 2000). Not long after its publication, she began to hear from members of the Society, as well as historians and other readers, with questions, most pertaining to the early days of the Society of the Sacred Heart. Such questions were difficult to respond to adequately in emails or short conversations, and it soon became clear that additional research was in order. The result, *The Society of the Sacred Heart in 19th century France, 1800-1865*, was released by Cork University Press in April.



Sister Kilroy's latest publication contains five essays on aspects of the Society of the Sacred Heart in the lifetime of St. Madeleine Sophie. Drawn from the extensive archives of the Society in Rome, especially the collection of St. Madeleine Sophie's 14,000 letters, the essays reveal the Society of the Sacred Heart as a community coming into being during a time of immense change and conflict. During

her 85 years, 1779-1865, Sophie was witness to the French Revolution, Napoleon's regime and two additional civil wars, as well as the social turmoil that came with the political upheavals. Without losing sight of what she thought her little Society should be, she learned to negotiate between and among the governments of France, the

leadership of the Church, and other power players who wanted to control the destiny of what she had created.

It turns out that Sophie's life makes for a great novel. Connie Solari, long-time educator at Sacred Heart Schools, Atherton, wrote a fictionalized history of Sophie's life, *Sophie's Fire*, published in August. It tells much the same story as Sister Kilroy's academic work, with the added interest of imagined characters and dialogue. Much of the language attributed to Sophie in the *Sophie's Fire* is drawn from the same sources that Sister Kilroy used.



During her forty years at Sacred Heart, Ms. Solari has taught French and English; served as English department chair, dean of faculty and academic dean; and coordinated the ESCJ (Educators of the Sacred Heart), a group of over 200 faculty and staff who are committed to learning more about the charism and heritage of the Society. In 2008, she was invited to address the Network of Sacred Heart Schools' conference on her relationship with Madeleine Sophie Barat.

"Over the next six months I read everything I could get my hands on about Sophie and discovered in the process that our lives overlap in many key areas," Ms. Solari explains on her website, www.sophiesfire.com. "She began to live for me in the present. Rather than the distant, pious figure I'd imagined her to be, she turned out to be passionate, witty, funny, at times even edgy – the kind of person I would have loved to call a friend." From that presentation, a novel was born. ✦

(Both *The Society of the Sacred Heart in 19th century France, 1800-1865* and *Sophie's Fire* are available through Amazon.com.)

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► **Called to Become
One Body in Christ,**
Sister Gwen Hoeffel went

to Japan as a missionary volunteer in
1965 and remained.



12

▼ **Members of the
Woodlands Academy
community carry**

flags of their native countries. The
twenty-five flags are a clear visual
representation of the school's
Dialogue toward Communion.



Month of Philippine: February 2013

As part of the observance of the Year of Faith (October 11, 2012 – November 24, 2013) the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops is encouraging American Catholics to learn more about St. Rose Philippine Duchesne during the month of February, 2013. The U.S. Province will offer a daily reflection on St. Philippine on our website, www.rscj.org, or you can sign up on our site to receive the reflections by email.

