



RSHM Highlights

Eastern American Area

Spring 2022

THIS LAND WAS MADE FOR YOU AND ME

I first met Eduardo in the Naples jail in 2018. He had been caught driving without a license. This predicament is common among many of the workers in Immokalee, Florida since they are not eligible for a Florida driver's license until qualified and approved for a work card by the US Citizenship and Immigration Service. In the meantime, they risk driving to get to work. Once a man is in our local jail, Immigration and Customs Enforcement is contacted and, after serving his sentence set by the Collier County Court, he is transported to the Miami Krome Detention Center where he faces deportation. When Eduardo's wife Maria came to our Legal Aid office to beg us to represent him, I began my visits to the Naples jail to prepare his case.

I had good reason to be hopeful that my defense would succeed. The law allows a judge to cancel deportation if a US citizen child would suffer exceptional and extremely unusual hardship upon a parent's deportation, provided that parent has good moral character and residence in the US for 10 years. Maria told us they had lived here for more than 10 years and had a son with Down syndrome. I came to know that Eduardo was of good character.

Once he was transferred to Miami detention, I was able to get an immigration judge to set a bond and he was released from detention. He worked consistently for the next three years supporting his family. He now faces a June 2022 individual hearing with great fear and anxiety, worrying that his deportation might be ordered. I hope and pray that the judge will be favorable once he learns Eduardo's story.

Eduardo entered the US through Arizona in 1998 and began a life of farm work in Immokalee, Florida. He met his future wife Maria, also a farm worker, soon after arriving. By the time I met them in 2018, they had had 5 US citizen children. Maria, although diagnosed with lupus, continued to work part-time in the packing houses sorting tomatoes. Sr. Ines soon became her good friend. With donations we have been able to keep up the payments for her medication.



L to R: Eduardo, Maria, Clara, Diana, Srs. Ines and Maureen

Their oldest, Clara, has graduated from high school and is in the US Army. She is counting on her service to help further her education. Son Eduardo will graduate from high school this June and is his father's shadow when not in school. His dad no longer does farm work, but for the last 18 years has done construction and electrical work. With his improved earnings, he bought their own trailer in 2010. With the help of recent donations, we were able to lend him money to repair it. He is faithfully working off the loan.

The middle child, Adriana, now in high school, is a little mother to her Down syndrome brother, Marco, and the youngest, Diana, whom she tutors. She is ever attentive to Marco who needs a great deal of help. He doesn't talk but can walk and feed himself. At our recent farewell party for Sr. Ines, who has been missioned to Lampedusa, I observed how much these children love their father. Marco especially continually looked at his father and laughed amidst many hugs.

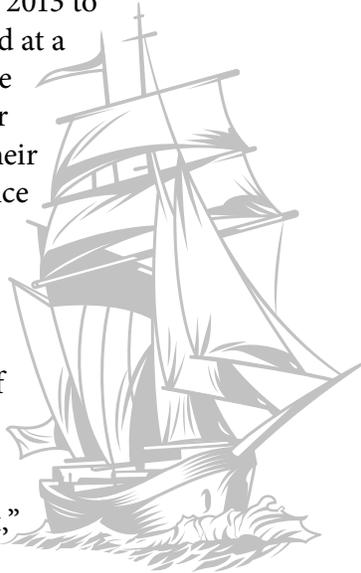
When lining up witnesses for the hearing, I phoned Marco's doctor, a busy pediatrician in Miami. He told me how much he loved these parents. When Marco was a baby, he had needed a kidney transplant, so as a result, the doctor came to know Eduardo and Maria well. He could not stop praising them. I asked if he could find time in his busy practice to give me a letter of reference for Eduardo. He said "Oh no!" He would come personally to testify and tell the judge how outstanding and admirable Eduardo and Maria are.

by Maureen Kelleher, RSHM

Signs of the Times

Journeying Together: Synod and Synodality

I confess to having felt some ambivalence when I was asked to join the Synod Task Force for our Area. I have not been that engaged by recent synods, their topics or the results. I suspect that many of you for one reason or another are similarly detached. What has drawn and sustained my interest in this synod, however, is a sense of how profoundly Pope Francis understands our world when he calls for all of us to march collectively toward the future. In an address in 2013 to the city and world, delivered at a time when immigrants were perishing in the waters near Lampedusa, he lamented their suffering and the indifference of a passive world. He has returned frequently to the image of desperate people trying to survive and has likened it to the situation of fear-filled disciples crying out in a sinking boat.



“We are all in the same boat,” he pleads, not only the victims but the detached onlookers on shore who remain blind to their own vulnerability. We must move forward in a new way, or we will all sink in these storm-tossed waters. He drew on a similar image of our being in the same boat when he prayed alone in St. Peter’s Square at the height of the pandemic, March 27, 2020. He said then, “The pandemic has reminded us that we are all in the same boat.” He then added, “The storm exposes our vulnerability and uncovers those false and superfluous certainties around which we have constructed our daily schedules And now that we are in a stormy sea, we implore you: wake up, Lord!” He calls on the church to realize in faith that we are all in this together.

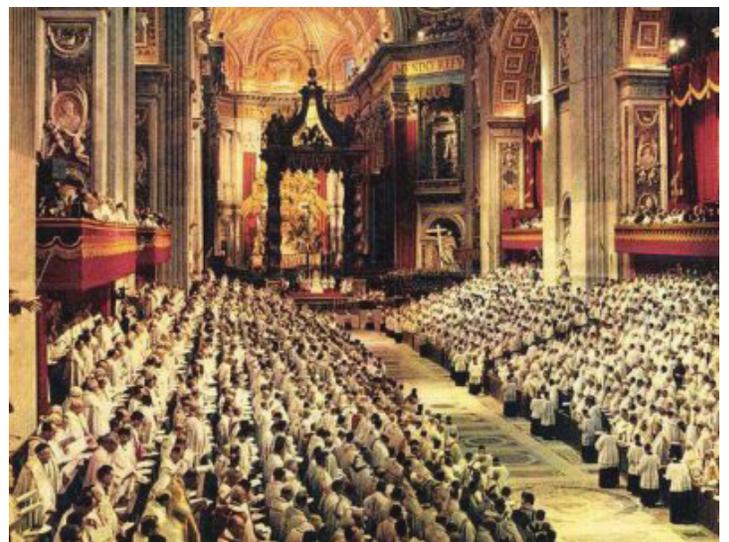
Today the Pope has chosen this profoundly traditional vehicle of a synod for a collective journey of a church and a world in crisis. The word synod means journeying together and it can be traced in Acts 15 to the meeting of leaders who were sharply divided



For a synodal Church
communion | participation | mission

over their relation to Jewish law. Must they continue strict observance of Jewish laws, such as the circumcision of their male converts? Peter and Paul faced up to an intense conflict with transparency and inclusiveness.

They shared their experience of what the Spirit had done through them among the Gentiles. Through a process of speaking, listening, and prayer, finally the community came to a liberating decision. James, their leader, announced it with words that exemplify synodality: “It has seemed good **to the Holy Spirit and to us** that” The decision discerned under the guidance of the Holy Spirit impelled the community outward to a wider world. Pope Francis is calling us to restore that centrality of mission in communion and full participation, of being sent to a suffering world.



Vatican II restored the long dormant synod of bishops, but most participants and observers believe that it has not been fully effective. Francis does not change the structure of the synod as envisioned by Vatican II. He

adopts it but also adapts it. Synods begin with a Papal invitation through a Secretariat that reaches out for input from all dioceses, ecclesial bodies, and worldwide churches. For this synod Francis has called for an expansion of the consultation whose information will affect the agenda itself. Of note for us is that although women (such as our Sr. Maureen Kelleher) have been invited to synods before, he has formalized the role of the leaders of Religious Congregations of Women who may gather input from their congregations. Listen to the people at the edges, Francis insists. Enable them to share their experiences of how the church has nourished them and sometimes forgotten them. This is the mission of the church: to reach out to each and every person from the perspective of God who lovingly created us and this world we have so polluted and destroyed.

If synods seemed to have lost their relevance, it is not because the Spirit has departed or Jesus stayed asleep in the boat. Some of us remember the transformative impact of the document from a Synod of Bishops that changed our lives, “Call to Justice” in 1971.

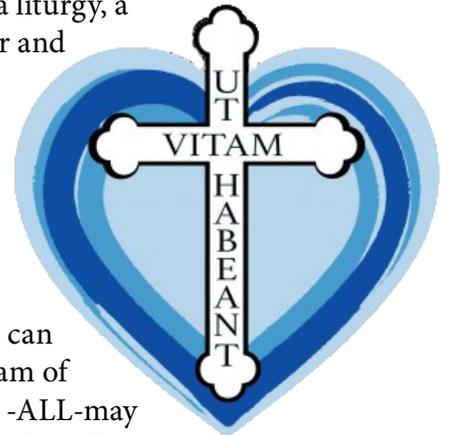


In the fifty years since then we have all been changed by the central insight that work for justice is a constitutive part of the Gospel. Francis builds upon that tradition to deepen awareness of the need to both listen to and give voice to all members of the church. The participants on this journey must include and sometimes even be led by the marginalized, expanding the reach of constitutive justice in this new millennium. Synods may become

a way of being church, stumbling but moving forward along a path of that is ultimately joyous.

The Pope who grieved over Lampedusa also wrote “The Joy of the Gospel.” For RSHM it may become a loving journey, helping us to recall our broad experiences, on many continents and through different ministries. We have developed processes that seek greater and more prayerful input into the decisions that affect all our lives. A colleague of mine from Marymount University, Brian Flanagan, expressed well the joyful possibilities of synodality as a new way of being: “Rather than just holding synods, the church celebrates them. A synod is not a meeting at which there happens to be some prayer, but instead is a liturgy, a collective act of prayer and discernment.”

As a community, we can find joy in such a journey that will also be a sharing in the renewal of the church. As RSHM we can resonate with the dream of our founders that “all -ALL-may have life and have it to the full.”



REFERENCES

- Visit to Lampedusa of Holy Father Francis, “Arena Sports Camp,” Salina Quarter, July, 2013.
- Prayer of Pope Francis in St. Peter’s Square, March 27, 2020.
- “Justice in the World” by the 1971 Synod of Catholic Bishops.

by Jacquelyn Porter, RSHM



In the heart of Neuilly sur Seine, where Marymount Paris finds its home, winter days are winding down, days are getting longer, and spring feels just around the corner. The light at the end of the COVID tunnel beams brighter every day. On the horizon, we are acutely aware of the troubling global and political dynamics that inevitably impact our community of students from 40 different countries, speaking a panoply of mother tongues, and representing 16 religions.

In this delicate balance of both growing optimism and unsettling disquietude, Marymount Paris turned to the light and life that is the promise of our Founders with the unveiling of an exquisite educational Living Classroom.

While the expression of how we live out the RSHM tradition may adapt to suit the needs of our time, the call of humans' intimate connection to the outside world is one that finds its roots in the founding of our school.

When Mother Butler sailed from New York to Europe to found the first Marymount school on the continent, she found a beautiful and stately property at 72 boulevard de la Saussaye after many months of travails in her research. Upon hearing of the prospect, Mother St. Constance reminded Mother Butler "il faut un jardin, mes enfants [it takes a garden, my children]." Since our outdoor learning project began in 2018, this memorable phrase carried the school through the intentional planning of the Living Classroom in the spacious, yet underutilized, gardens of our school.

We believe that outdoor learning for children is fundamental for a rich and balanced growth in crucial developmental areas; most notably, students' self-identification as active and principled stewards of the

natural world. We aim to harness the green fingers of every student to take us all on a journey of learning with life itself.

Additionally, in the era of COVID-19, the importance of flexible, engaging, and year-round outdoor learning spaces takes on a special significance, having experiential interactions at its core.

Over the past several months, I spoke with many of our students as they watched the construction of the Living Classroom – I listened to them, answered their questions, and shared in their anticipation. And despite the challenges brought by COVID-19, the optimism was abundant to see life continuing and thriving in our Living Classroom.

Together, we imagined the rich, meaningful, and enduring knowledge they would acquire about themselves, their studies, and the world around them that could be enhanced by outdoor learning. In short, we imagined how they would learn about life – and their place in it. The Living Classroom is a new way for our school to express our commitment to the guiding vision of our Founders and their gift to us "that all may have life and have it to the full."

We celebrated the Living Classroom Inauguration and Blessing on March 8th. At the ceremony, one of our student speakers wisely developed the connection between our school project and *Laudato Si* when she quoted Pope Francis' explanation that the Earth "was here before us and was given to us by God. It is a common good, belonging to all and meant for all." She then rallied her fellow students and reminded them that once the ceremonial ribbon was cut, their important work as Marymount Paris environmental stewards began.

This was a poignant and touching example of the synodal journey



of our global community that was eloquently expressed in Sr. Margaret's Fielding's letter on Founders Day. The Living Classroom Inauguration and Blessing reminded our school community of the multiple means of expression that we as lay people have at our hands to share in the charisma of Père Gailhac as we increasingly accept the privilege and the responsibility of walking in the footsteps of the RSHM.

by Sarah Thomas, Head of School

Grace

During Lent, the Church of St. Ignatius Loyola, NYC, invited speakers for a Novena of Grace of St. Francis Xavier. The following reflection is from a presentation by Catherine Patten, RSHM.

“WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?”

These are Jesus’ first words in the Gospel of John (Jn 1:37). Staying or abiding is very important in the fourth Gospel. I imagine that the disciples whom Jesus addressed really want to ask, “Who are you?” or to say, “We want to get to know you.” “Where do you live?” Jesus hears their deep desire and invites them. “Come and see.” And we learn they went, they saw, and they stayed with him.

Jesus poses that question to each of us again and again. “What do you want?” “What are you looking for?” It’s a very important question. And Jesus certainly asks it when we choose to make a novena such as this one.

St. Ignatius clearly understood the importance of focusing our desires when we come to prayer. In fact, in the Spiritual Exercises he directs the retreatant to pray for specific graces in each of the weeks. Further, Ignatius instructs the retreatant to begin each time of prayer by asking for the grace. Many years ago, a spiritual director told me that asking for **the grace** is the most important part of Ignatian prayer. Asking for what we desire. And if we don’t really want the grace Ignatius suggests, we are instructed to pray for the desire to desire it. Asking for what we want. That focus is the important thing.

The whole of our Christian tradition, especially the mystical tradition, tells us that God works with us through our desires. Julian of Norwich, the 14th century mystic, says that when God wants to give us a gift, God makes us desire it. She says that the Lord told her,

“First, it is my will that you should have it,
and then I make you to wish it,
and then I make you beseech it.
And if you beseech,
how could it be that you would not have what you
beseech?” (p. 157).

I believe that’s true. That’s how it works.

Karl Rahner, a Jesuit and one of the most renowned theologians of the 20th century, says that to be human is to have within us a capacity for the divine, a drive for transcendence. St. Augustine in the fourth century is talking about that same urge, that inner disquiet, when he says, “Our hearts are restless until they rest in you.” Augustine tells us in his *Confessions* that he went down many false paths before he came to that understanding. Before he understood what really his deepest desire was. We know that not all our desires are equal, or equally helpful. And they can lead us astray. The genius of Ignatius was his ability to describe, in a systematic way, how to sort out our desires through discernment of spirits. Often our deepest desires are not clear, even to ourselves. Like the disciples, we stumble in answering Jesus’ question, “What do you want?” “What are you looking for?” I once spent an entire 8-day retreat wrestling with that question.

The whole Christian tradition tells us that God wants to help us to become who we truly are. To enter into God’s own life. To grow in our capacity to be loved and to love. To enter into union with our triune God and to be freed to give ourselves to God’s desire for us and for the World. Our mission. We certainly see that fruit, that freedom to give oneself wholly to God’s desires, in Ignatius and in St. Francis Xavier, who became such a great missionary to the East.

And so, Jesus asks each of us, “What do you want? What are you looking for?”

In great confidence, we pray for one another during this Novena, and with Ignatius and Francis Xavier, we listen to Jesus asking us, “What are you looking for?”

Over the last several years, the Black Lives Matter movement, anti-Asian sentiment arising during the pandemic, and the rejection of immigrants and refugees at our Southern border make it clear that bias and discrimination are all too present and virulent in our society.



Wyneisha Kinsey Huntt (3rd from left) with Srs. Catherine Vincie, Susan Gardella, and Rosamond Blanchet

Less obvious, however, are the ways in which we are unintentionally complicit through unconscious bias and microaggressions in the discrimination we abhor—not only in the public arena, but even within our personal relationships and communities. To address this aspect of diversity, equity, and inclusion, we welcomed Wyneisha Kinsey Huntt as presenter at our Area Day in February, when we celebrate the founding of our RSHM Institute.

She is a graduate of Preston High School, a Sisters of Divine Compassion school in the Bronx, NY. Wyneisha has a degree in Black Studies and Critical Race Theory from NYU and is now completing a Master of Divinity from New York Theological Seminary. Manager of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at the law firm of O'Melveny & Myers, she has over eight years of experience in legal recruiting and employee engagement for underrepresented groups in law. She also gives workshops to school boards and other organizations, such as the Archdiocesan Council of Women Religious.

Wyneisha's presentation was set in the context of the Gospel. She noted that because we are secure in God's forgiveness and love, we are able "to confess our complicity in structures of injustice and oppression, to become generous conversation partners, and to welcome and learn from those who are different from us."

She was dynamic, personable, and engaging, enabling us to look honestly at ourselves without becoming defensive.

Bias is the leaning toward or away from something or someone because of previous experience; for example,

an attack by a dog can lead to the assumption that all dogs are vicious. Unconscious biases result from social stereotypes from outside our conscious awareness; for example, biases about race, gender, age, physical ability, education, religion, culture, politics, family structure, and so on. As we listened to Wyneisha's explanations, it was impossible not to "self-check"—how have I succumbed to unconscious bias in my perceptions of other individuals and groups?

Wyneisha explained that microaggressions are expressions of unconscious bias evidenced in the everyday slights, put-downs, and dismissiveness that members of marginalized groups experience. The individual committing the microaggression is often unaware of being offensive or demeaning. The difference between intent and impact is key. I may want to affirm someone when I say, "you're so articulate," but the person hears that I don't expect someone of her race, ethnicity, or educational level to be well-spoken. Similarly, claiming that we "don't see color" invalidates the identity of the person of color we are speaking to or about.

So how do we avoid these obstacles to relationships? We stop. Think. Self-check. Ask questions. Make space in our lives for those who are different from me or my group. We do the hard work of dialogue and reconciliation.

The sisters were very enthusiastic about Wyneisha's presentation and found the applicability to our own cultural diversity especially relevant. In small groups, we shared on the questions: "What did you learn about yourself today?" "What do you need to start, stop, or continue doing?" "How can compassion inform how you interact with others?" These self-checks challenge us to create an inclusive environment in our ministries and communities, to promote a sense of belonging, and to value the diverse talents, beliefs, backgrounds, and ways of living of others.

by Joanne Safian, RSHM



The RSHM Legacy

I am convinced that what ties the past and the present and what foreshadows a future filled with hope in the schools and ministries which RSHM have founded is rooted in a particular set of values and our belief system.

Our values are based on our commitment to a particular understanding of the human person as both body and spirit – an anthropology. Our belief system is rooted in a loving God who calls us into an infinite future and to whom we have committed our lives.

The religious tradition that we come out of, Roman Catholic Christianity, is convinced that the **human person is both body and spirit**. To put it in more contemporary anthropological language, we would now say that the human person is an **“embodied spirit,”** a body so tied to its spirit that there is no separating it in this lifetime. I can hear you saying, “what’s the big deal?” This conviction really is a big deal because it functions! We know that our self-understanding determines our treatment of ourselves and others; it determines where we will channel our life’s energies; it determines what we will study, where we will take a job, what our philanthropic commitments will be. It determines where we place our ultimate hope.

We are called to value our **body**. This means to love it, respect its abilities, limitations and challenges, to engage in good nutritional habits and exercise, and to clothe it with the dignity it deserves. At this moment of history, it means a rejection of any discrimination against women’s bodies and a rejection of violence on any level toward any of us—women or men. The reality of the drug culture, widespread misogyny, human trafficking, modern day slavery, war and vilifying refugees is a discouraging sign that far too many do not believe in the dignity of the human person – even at the bodily dimension.

Attention to the **spirit** is a little more difficult since it is an invisible dimension of the human person. Not everyone shares our conviction of the existence of a spiritual life or that a transcendent Spirit has created us, sustains us and calls us into the future even beyond death.

Our culture here in the US sometimes so values our bodies, that one wonders if the spirit has

any role to play in our lives. We have the reality that many persons who have lost connection with their religious affiliation have also lost touch with their “spirituality.” However, we hear many people saying, “I’m spiritual, not religious.” They have come alive to the notion that there is a world of spirit and that there is a spiritual dimension to their lives.

Besides being embodied spirits, there is also the reality that there are many of us. To be conscious of the value of our individual lives only goes so far. We are intrinsically communal persons and bound together in a relationship of care and concern. We are community with humanity spread all over this globe and in community with every element of the cosmos. I want to reinforce here that each one of us alone and all of us together have obligations to the **common good**. The ecological crisis we face has everything to do with not taking our obligations to others (human and non-human alike) seriously.

What legacy do we want to leave behind us?

We want to contribute to the vitality of all with whom we minister as healthy embodied persons of spirit and committed to the common good.

We want to leave behind a belief that commitment especially to the spiritual dimension of life gives meaning, dynamism and dignity to one’s whole life and is an invaluable human project.

We want to witness to the fact that the transcendent Spirit, creator of the universe, is also a personal presence to whom one can entrust one’s whole life.

We would also like to leave a tradition:

- of being rooted in a faith community even in the midst of significant disenchantment with religious institutions
- of asking questions of ultimate concern about the human person and the cosmos
- of raising questions about religious beliefs and commitments

The motto of the RSHM is “That all may have life and have it to the full.” There is a vitality in this community that I believe comes out of this scriptural mandate and that we hope is contagious. If we have in any way contributed to these values, we will have fulfilled our purpose of bringing fullness of life to all as the Christian scriptures call us to do.

by Catherine Vincie, RSHM



photo by Scott Eaton

HIGHLIGHTS PUZZLE: Lamentations

The themed clues in this puzzle are laments, not necessarily scriptural. Answers are posted at www.rshh-east.org/rshh-highlights

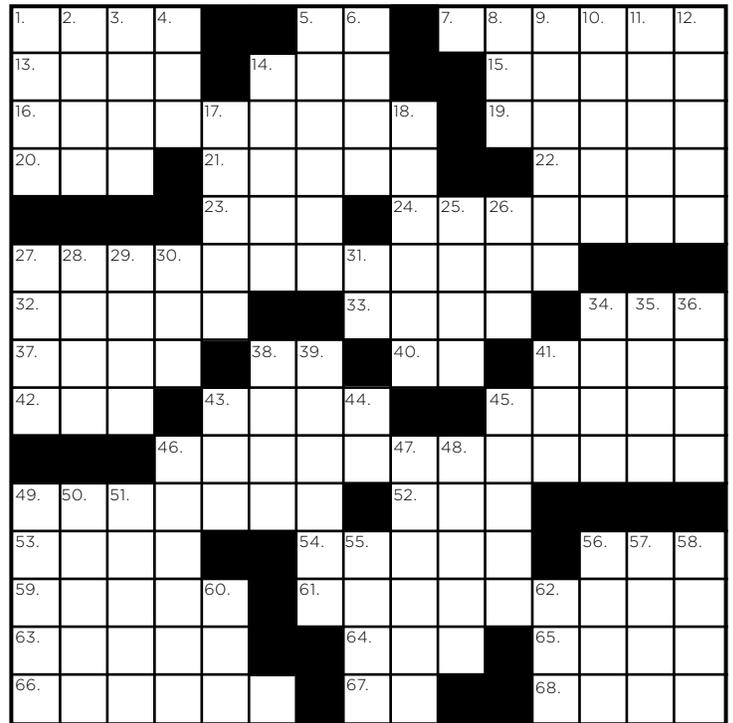
Across

1. More or _____
5. Abbreviation for trademark
7. If I genuflect, _____ (3 words) kneel
13. Does something
14. Congresswoman Ocasio-Cortez, familiarly
15. King's partner
16. *It's a miserable failure!*
19. Bluefish, familiarly
20. Egg _____
21. _____ Parton
22. Wild party
23. Twosome
24. *My pet is dead*
27. *Humble words before receiving Holy Communion*
32. West Wing Martin _____
33. Pasta choice
34. Atomic Energy Commission, abbr.
37. _____ boro Man
38. NY/NJ section of the US
40. Post Office, abbr.
41. Flat-topped hill in arid area
42. _____ Jeanne d'Arc
43. Total defeat
45. Bad guys in cop-speak
46. Keep antagonists from Snoopy, the Flying Ace
49. *I'm in trouble*
52. Ever, to poets
53. Send out
54. _____ Lumpur

56. ' _____ a gift to be simple
59. Couldn't not
61. *There's nothing left*
63. A contemptible person, slangily
64. Formerly named
65. Black-and-white cookie
66. *What to do with a hole in a sock*
67. When added to Kansas, names another state
68. Shed tears

Down

1. Green space in front of a house
2. Resound
3. Without a date
4. Highspeed aircraft, briefly
5. Not high enough
6. 1950 in Roman numerals
8. Barbequed beef, abbr.
9. Speech in tribute, often at a funeral
10. Surgeon prefix
11. Agree condescendingly
12. " _____ for an eye"
14. Or so
17. Append
18. One way of medicating
25. _____ the Great, Holy Roman Emperor, 962-973
26. Run between f and j
27. Systems of belief
28. A prop for a magician
29. Mother in Paris
30. _____ son Mandela
31. Wizard location



34. _____dynamic
35. TV sports channel
36. She was a Mama with the Papas
38. Standard
39. I found it!
41. La Mediterraneane
43. Resident assistants, briefly
44. Adoro _____, I adore you
45. Legal assistants, briefly
46. How you may be in frost
47. A user needs one, perhaps
48. Contradict
49. Report on a non-descript meal: " _____ (2 words) leftovers"
50. Nebraska's largest city
51. Duck with soft down feathers
55. Long bone in forearm
56. Raced at top speed, slangily
57. Got it!
58. " _____ in the Name of Love"
60. _____garchy, rule by a few
62. High's counterpart

Bea McMahon, RSHM

RSHM Highlights is a production of the Communications and Advancement Office of the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary, Eastern America. Editors: Maureen Egan, Bea McMahon, RSHM, Catherine Vincie, RSHM, Cathy Wilkins, and Cleve Youngblood, RSHM | Design: Barbara DeAngelo

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