



# RSHM Highlights

Eastern America

Winter 2021

## Eastern America Area Day - December 5, 2020

*The December 5 Eastern America Area Day was a celebration of the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception - the central feast of the RSHM Institute and the founding of Marymount - and a remembrance of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the martyrdom of the four Churchwomen in El Salvador.*



Remembering is a sacred activity ... we remember our roots, we remember our life commitments, we remember the gifts and graces of our lives, we remember the traumas of our lives. We remember with special fondness those who were part of our lives and now are hidden in God in the communion of saints. December 2 was a special day of remembrance for the four Churchwomen murdered by a government militia of El Salvador in 1980. Pictured above left to right, they were lay missioner Jean Donovan, Ursuline sister Dorothy Kazel, and two Maryknoll sisters, Maura Clarke and Ita Ford. Some of you may remember Ita as she graduated from Marymount Manhattan College in 1961.

On this 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their deaths, we remembered them in prayer at our Celebration of the Immaculate Conception which was our December 5 Area Day.

We recalled that they gave their lives:

- ✝ for the sake of the people of El Salvador,
- ✝ for the sake of the gospel promise of peace built on justice,
- ✝ for the sake of God's beloved community.

We reminded ourselves that "if the lives and sacrifices of our many modern martyrs are going to have any meaning in the world today, it will be because we still feel their pain and are open to listen to the Gospel calling us." We prayed for forgiveness for the sin that is within and around us; we prayed in gratitude to the God who gave us the example of these martyrs so that we can find the way to fullness of life in this world.

In the Maryknoll Sisters' December 2 virtual

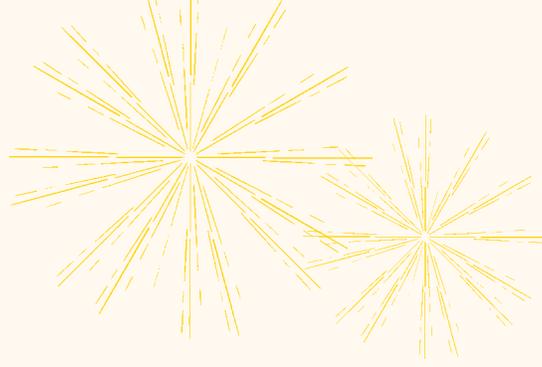


*Bearing Witness*

*continued on page 2*

THANK YOU FOR

# Highlights Feedback!



*continued from page 1*

I just read the featured article *Margaret Morrissey, RSHM: A Life of Service with a French Flair* and was, once again, inspired by the women who led so many others to roles of caring, service, and leadership. My sister, brother and I all started at Assumption Hall in 1955 and I was blessed to have 8 years in that community as a student. I have not met Sister (Mother) Margaret Morrissey, but her brother Charles was my sister Amy's godfather and my father's partner in their NYC Engineering and Architecture firm. I believe she may be the reason my parents gave us the opportunity to begin our education in the Marymount tradition. I just want to express my thanks for her inspiration and commitments and condolences on the loss of her brother. He and Monica were always so nice and fun when we were together. And I just want to thank all of you who continue to reach out to those of us who are no longer active members of the Marymount and RSHM community. I am ever grateful for what I learned, the support I received, and the faith that has sustained me over the years. Love and peace.

*Susan Praeger*

This is an uplifting advance in publications. The design was right on target and I enjoyed each of the varied contributions. The article on Marymount School of New York was particularly interesting to me. The issue spoke "life," among our sisters and the many who are sharing and carrying on their work. Congratulations and thanks.

*Jacquelyn Porter, RSHM*

In *Still Far to Go*, Sr. Cleve cites many women who paved the way for more inclusion in society. I would also include our own RSHM who have been outstanding in their "humble, generous, often unnoticed service" to the life of the Church and our world. And I agree that there is still more progress to be made for women's voices to be heard both in the Church and society.

*Sue Vanderveldt Hyman MMC Tarrytown '61*

I love this *Highlights*, especially Joanne Safian's wonderful article about Margaret Morrissey. The puzzle was a challenge. It probably would be fun to have a few of us doing it together.

*Eileen Buckley, RSHM*

It was a real gift for me, my family and Facebook friends to read the fabulous article in the RSHM fall 2020 *Highlights, Doni Cribari Songbook*. How well it captured her creativity and generous spirit! Doni's message to the world is fundamental to all of us who wish for deep and soulful connections to others. "Hope is the thing with feathers" (thank you, Emily Dickinson, who inspired both Doni and me). That hope flew to us all from your words in this publication and from Doni's music. Thank you for a true tribute!

*Camille Cribari Linen, Marymount Tarrytown: Academy '53, College '57*

I very much enjoyed the recent *Highlights* and especially the article about the program at Marymount School of New York to end racism in our country. That issue is very important to me.

*Kathleen Kanet, RSHM*

commemoration of their martyrdom, they shared the testimony of family and friends of the four women who told of the many ways their sacrifice had changed them and the lives of their families over the years and even today. They spoke of lives given over to service in El Salvador, in South Sudan with Doctors without Borders, and of living with the conviction that bringing justice to those in need is what we are called to do now.

Celebrating these martyrs' anniversary seemed a fitting thing to do on the day we honor Mary in her Immaculate Conception. As our RSHM Constitutions remind us: "The call to follow Jesus Christ is not given once and for all. It invites us to a daily response to God's loving fashioning of each one of us, as individuals, and as an Institute. Our model in this response is Mary the woman of faith, the woman filled with the Spirit, the poor one of Yahweh who treasured all things and pondered them in her heart, who heard the Word of God and did it, who in love bore Jesus and brought him to birth in others" (Constitutions 56).

Remembrance is central for the Catholic Christian community. Above all things, we remember what God has done in Christ; what God has done through Mary's unconditional "yes;" and what God has done in four ordinary women much like ourselves. We have just celebrated the coming of God in Jesus at Christmas through the courage and faith of a young Jewish girl; we remember with gratitude what God has done in these four women; and we remember what God does through each one of us.

# Signs of the Times

## WORSHIP DURING A PANDEMIC

by Elizabeth Kolb, RSHM

What does it mean to worship God during a pandemic? How can we, people of faith, worship and be nourished?

The word “Eucharist” means thanksgiving. Eucharist has usually brought us together to enter into a time of thanksgiving with other believers.

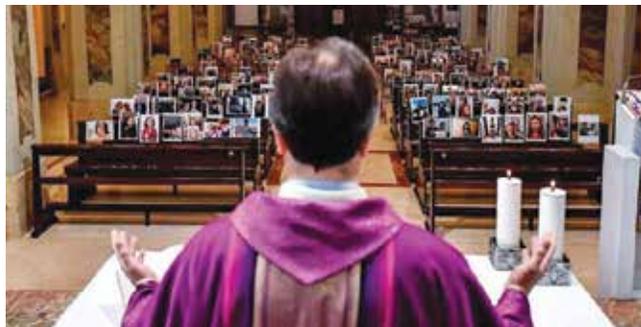
Long ago, when I was involved in Religious Education for children, I would compare the Mass with a visit to grandmother’s house for Sunday dinner. Grandma would prepare before you got there with both nourishment and enjoyment in mind. Then, when all were gathered at the table for the meal, there would always be stories. Cherished memories were lived again, and children came to know and savor their family heritage.

We went to Grandma’s to show her how important she is in our lives, and to develop that relationship of love. We showed our love for her and Grandpa, and the rest of the family: those gathered and those at a distance, those alive and those who had died.

Isn’t that what the Mass is? A time to gather as a family of faith. A time to break bread together. A time to hear stories that connect us to the present, the past, and the future, and to enter into keeping memory through words and actions that engage us with what God has done in Christ. As the scriptures provide stories for our lives, a homilist can provide background and make connections for our grasp of their significance today.

So here we are, in the midst of a pandemic, trying to be faithful. And yet, our churches (at the moment of this writing) are open at 25% capacity. Some of us feel safe there; others feel they are at too high a risk to attend Mass in person.

At the start of the pandemic, when the churches closed, my home community of four sisters was fortunate to be able to pray and receive Eucharist together. We took turns leading the prayer and we broke open and shared the Word together. It was life giving! But it wasn’t Mass. My parish streamed the daily Mass, but watching on a 13-inch computer screen didn’t seem to cut it. On Sundays, we were able to watch Mass on TV, and this had some music with it. But for the most part, it was the priest(s) on the screen and us at home. The act of coming together as Church to remember, to give thanks and to share in the Eucharistic gifts was sadly missing.



For me, the Mass needs a community of people, coming together to worship God, give thanks for the marvels God has done, pray for the needs of the world, and yes, remember what happened. That is, Jesus lived, loved, died and was raised, and he comes to us in the scripture and in the breaking of the bread. In that act of remembering we give praise and worship to the One we love above all else, becoming ourselves the Body of Christ.

With this pandemic, so much has changed. Sometimes, a lay person can read, other times, not. Now, only the priest distributes communion in most churches. Some believers are afraid to receive. There is no longer the handshake of peace, and in many places, there is not even a nod of peace.

We have lost the liturgical roles of lector and extraordinary minister of holy communion. Our ushers are needed to check temperatures, to check for masks and to remind people to sanitize their hands before entering. Without a collection or an offertory procession, the music that once accompanied those activities is not heard.

Recently, I was watching Mass on TV. The presider was wonderful. He offered a hopeful and nourishing homily. But during the psalm (The Lord is My Shepherd) we were shown images of Christ on the Cross, Mary in a stained-glass window, and other unrelated images. When at Mass in person, I would feel that I was not focusing if I were to look around the Church. But it seems to be a common practice for the camera person to pan the church for images, as if we need to be continually shown something. So, we lose the silent, inward moment.

I understand the value of the TV or computer Mass, but I find it sorely lacking in community. And I wonder what it will be like when we can gather again in large groups. How many will return to the pews and how many will worship from the armchair? My fear is that we risk the loss of community and the relevance of community for true Eucharistic celebration.

# A SPECIAL CELEBRATION

## Sisters at Marymount Tarrytown gathered in the Native Garden on the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi to conclude the Season of Creation initiated by Pope Francis.

Sr. Breda Shelley's introduction set the tone for an inspirational prayer service:

*These past weeks, we have participated in the Season of Creation, that time set aside by Pope Francis for all of us to reflect on our place within the story of creation and to accept our individual and collective responsibility for its care. Our commitment to the care of our common home is not something optional or a kind of add-on to our faith. Instead, as Pope Francis continually reminds us, the care of creation is central to our Christian faith. One of the striking features of the Covid-19 pandemic crisis is the way people turned to nature. Many spent more time in their gardens, getting in touch with the life, beauty and complexity of nature. Some found themselves within the spiritual shelter of nature, communing with the Creator of it all. Our sacred space is this Native Garden and the theme of our prayer this afternoon is Cultivating Hope.*

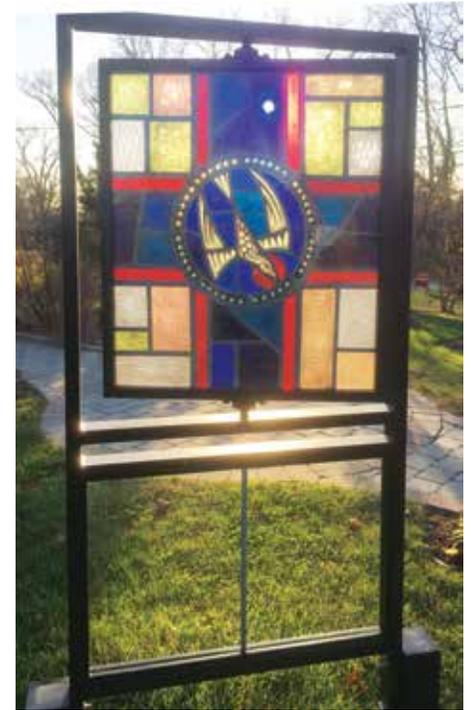
In preparation for the celebration, prayer groups had each chosen an area of environmental concern and a symbol of that concern. As each symbol was displayed, a group commitment was made to greater consciousness and action in that area.

For some, this was their first opportunity to view the beautiful stained-glass donor panels in the garden. When the original Chapel had been constructed on this site, Sr. Bianca Haglich

created stained glass panels for the doors. She remembers doing these designs, as with many other art projects, during whatever free time she could find while teaching art at Marymount College, Tarrytown. In time, those doors weathered, and the stained-glass designs began breaking up. The designs were very beautiful, and we wanted to preserve and use the stained glass in a new context if possible.

When the area where the Novitiate Chapel had once been was re-created as a native plant garden and we sought a way to honor the donors to the project, it became clear that we could repurpose Sr. Bianca's stained-glass designs toward this end. Two-tier panels were created with the donors' names inscribed on the bottom tier. The stained-glass material was placed on pivots so that they moved with the wind rather than fighting against it. This brought even greater energy and movement to the art pieces. Sr. Bianca delights in seeing her original designs for doors come to life again in a beautiful setting.

She finds in her creative works an analogy to children sent forth, freed from the nest. When they return, having taken on a life of their own, the joy of the beginning



is revisited and increased a hundredfold.

The fruit of human creativity in the midst of the flourishing beauty of nature, and the participation of so many individuals and groups created a very fitting celebration of the feast of the gentle saint who preached to birds and called the sun his brother. All the people and all forms of life in the garden seemed to echo the closing prayer of Sr. Breda, giving thanks for “people of every nation, animals of every species, all forms of vegetation, the planets, stars, and all the elements in union with the incarnate Word of God in whose image all was created.”

A final blessing was invoked in unison as the prayer service came to an end and the participants asked God to send them forth with joy and hope to care for creation.



The RSHM Zambezi Region includes RSHM in Zambia and Zimbabwe. The Region, begun almost 25 years ago in 1996, has always had a unified program of formation. God has blessed us and today our professed Zambian/Zimbabwean sisters are assuming leadership roles at both the local and congregational level.

In 2020 our formation program had five young women, three Zambian and two Zimbabwean, prepared and ready to become RSHM pre-novices. Ordinarily the five would have gathered in a local community, and one older sister would accompany them during their pre-novitiate stage of formation. But Covid-19 entered the world stage in 2020 and all plans had to pay attention to it. The border between Zambia and Zimbabwe was closed to most kinds of travel, and the usual bus mode of transportation became risky.

Amidst these difficulties, technology provided a channel for the professed sisters responsible for formation to consult with each other and come up with a way forward. The result has been two groups, one in Zambia with three pre-novices under the direction of Sr. Lelia O'Shea, and the second group in Zimbabwe consisting of two pre-novices with me.

Striving to preserve unity, Lelia and I have had numerous consultations with the aid of technology. We have also organized ZOOM meetings enabling the pre-novices to meet and to share experiences. This has involved challenges since some internet lines are not steady. In addition, electricity fails for various reasons, including circumstances like the current rainy season. It is difficult to pay steady attention to people if

you need to reconnect 5 times or more during a session!

Despite the difficulties though, technology has brought us blessings. We are participating in an international program called Live Out Loud. It is sponsored by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange, California, and has been a marvelous opportunity for all of us. The program is designed for pre-novices, novices, formators, and also community members living with pre-novices and novices. Online we even met a young Capuchin (in formation); whose mother was taught by Veronica Brand, RSHM at Marymount, Umtali (now Mutare) years ago!

The titles of the four parts of the program give a sense of the broad-based spiritual and humanistic education involved:

**Theological & Spiritual Aspects of the Vows**

**Finding Balance: Supporting Our Lives through Holistic Living**

**Christology: Growing Deeper with the Center of our Lives**

**The Grace of Intercultural Community Living**

The words of Loretta Sibukandi (pictured) may also indicate the development taking place:

*When I received the Bible at the ceremony to begin pre-novitiate, I felt a great joy in my heart and*



(L-R) Vimbai Pokoto (pre-novice), Joyce Rushinga, RSHM, Carol Schommer, RSHM, Petronella Manjenje (pre-novice)



(L-R) Loretta Sibukandi, Brenda Mutale, Cecilia Soko at reception ceremony for RSHM pre-novices Nov. 13, 2020

*my attitude towards the Scriptures changed. I used to find it difficult to read the Bible but now I have a desire to read God's word and reflect on what it is saying to me about my life and my vocation.*

Much of formation, especially in the area of community, happens with the day-to-day interactions of the group. Of necessity this has been very limited with our current group of five. Our hope is that there will soon be a relaxing of border restrictions enabling us to form one group of five RSHM pre-novices. Until that can happen, we will use technology in any way that presents itself, and trust in the Spirit to make graced connections even beyond our imagining.

*by Carol Schommer, RSHM*

# WHEN ROADS LEAD TO ROME

October 5th at Marymount Convent in Tarrytown was one of those days when joy and sorrow converge in celebration. Bishop Gerald Walsh presided at the Eucharistic Liturgy for his sister, Monica, confidently invoking God's blessing on her new mission to the RSHM International Leadership Council in Rome, at the same time feeling, with the Sisters and friends present, the sadness of the coming separation.

Monica's ministry as RSHM has brought her gifts for administration and her skill in nursing and pastoral care to groups both within and beyond the congregation. Sr. Bernadette Nonnon, Healthcare Coordinator for the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill (NY), remembers her early years working with Monica at Calvary Hospital in the Bronx. Bernadette was new to the nursing field then, and Monica's understanding and helpfulness made a great difference. Monica's combination of compassion and fun-loving spirit that lifted the hearts of many a patient who was on the end-of-life journey left a lasting impression on Bernadette.

The past two decades have brought increasing responsibilities to Monica, as she coordinated healthcare for active priests in the Archdiocese of New York and subsequently for RSHM outside of Marymount Convent. When called to the service of leadership as a Councilor in the Eastern American Province in 2012, she continued in her capacity as healthcare consultant for Capuchins and Franciscans in the New York area.

The recent farewell tribute of the Marymount Convent Nursing Staff demonstrates the impact Monica had on those with whom she worked:

*Sr. Monica has been an integral part of the Infirmary Nursing Department in so many ways. She was far more than a liaison for the Provincial Council these past few years. She was a mentor, a cheerleader, a retreat leader, a "covering nurse" (so nursing staff could attend events), but she's also been a friend. She always had a warm smile, a reassuring word and a strong hug during good and bad times. Her absence has left a large void in the lives of the Nursing Staff and the Infirmary Sisters.*

Sr. Catherine Patten's address at the Eucharistic Liturgy

for Monica highlighted the special gifts that she brought to community life and ministry:

*We've been giving thanks to God during this Eucharist, Monica, but now I want to give thanks to and for you. You have given yourself generously to the service of the Province/Area as a Councilor. When Catherine Vincie and I began, neither of us had lived or worked in Tarrytown for years. You were a treasure trove of history and networking! Your experience and knowledge of the province and also of the archdiocese and the neighboring religious congregations helped us enormously.*

*You gave yourself to the task of forming a team with openness, transparency, and trust. It helped to have someone who has good math skills, and who had been for a time provincial treasurer, as we took responsibility for our complex finances. You gave yourself to the needs of our ministries here as well as to the European schools. Your nursing experience has been invaluable for individual sisters, including me, and also for the Convent staff.*

*And, of course, there is your great sense of humor! You helped us to laugh a lot, sometimes at ourselves, sometimes at situations that needed a light touch.*

*You have dealt with the numerous obstacles of the last year, including your own health and chemo, the pandemic, and getting a visa, with admirable patience. We are grateful for your openness to the call of the Institute and your willingness to take on the challenges of moving to Rome, living in an international and intercultural community, and learning a new language (or languages).*

*My expectation and hope are that you will contribute a great deal to the generalate community, make new friends, and relish the widening of horizons, the new opportunities, and the chance to offer your gifts to the service of the Institute.*

We are happy to report that since Monica's move to Rome in October, the above expectation is being splendidly realized.



Convent Nursing Staff members (L to R): Ana Hernandez, Barbara Edwards, Sr. Monica, Mary Louise Ascollilo

# ISTITUTO MARYMOUNT CELEBRATES 90 YEARS

A safe harbor, a big family, a second home: these are the words our students use to describe the school in which they live every day. A school made of small gestures, strong emotions, but above all, made of people. As Prof. Andrea Forzoni, Head of Istituto Marymount, said, "People whose everyday stories continue to be interlaced today like the threads of a weaving, which come from afar away, uninterrupted over time."

An open book whose cover was designed 90 years ago, thanks to the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary, and whose content continues to grow in the spirit of its long tradition, "Celebrating the past, committed to the future".

The beauty of a unique campus, the solidity of an educational project that has seen thousands of boys and girls, men and women overcome obstacles, share experiences, and acquire an open-minded vision of the world.

A cohesive local community which, in the RSHM Network, has always possessed the explosive strength of a global network and cultivates unity through diversity, social justice and solidarity, "so that all may have life."



*"As a community together, step by step, students, teachers, parents and staff, are here to follow and nurture an always innovative and rigorous mission of education, a way of being and existing amidst the intemperances of life."* (Prof. Forzoni)

And it is precisely the students of Marymount, the heart of our constant commitment and the true protagonists of the world of tomorrow, who make this anniversary special, celebrating it through the heartfelt and sincere testimonies about a school that they feel is family: so let us wish Istituto Marymount a very happy birthday!

## Remarks offered by students at the 90<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY MASS in the Chapel at Istituto Marymount, October 7, 2020

### MATTEO DEL FRANCO

*"Marymount is our big family, it is not just a place where you learn subjects, but it is much more. It is a place where before Italian and maths come respect, social justice, friendship, solidarity and faith. The school is our safe port because whatever the problem is there will always be someone ready to help and it is not something to underestimate because they are small gestures that make us a big family, a family made of sisters, teachers, friends and staff. As Richard Bach said, 'the bond that links your true family is not one of blood but of respect and joy in each other's lives.' Sooner or later each one of us will face the world but with the ability of recognizing, appreciating and loving every person beyond physical proximity, beyond the place where they were born or where they live, as Pope Francis said, 'All Brothers'."*

### FLAVIA GRISPINI

*"I'm 13 years old and I'm in the eighth grade. On the occasion of the 90 years of our beloved Institute, I am happy to share my experience as*



*a part of this family. I have been a student at Marymount for the past 10 years and so I can honestly say that for me as for many of my classmates, it has now become a second home. It has been a magnificent cultural, educational and very personal experience of growth. In these 10 years I have been so lucky to find love and support in my classmates and my wonderful teachers who have taught me the true sense of freedom while always respecting other people around me. My time at Marymount has been filled day after day, year after year with hard work and many, many happy moments. Every corner of the school reminds me of something. These will be the precious memories which I will keep in my mind and my heart all my life. Thank you to all Marymount staff, teachers and friends. You are so special to me."*

# HIGHLIGHTS PUZZLE: Mystical Number

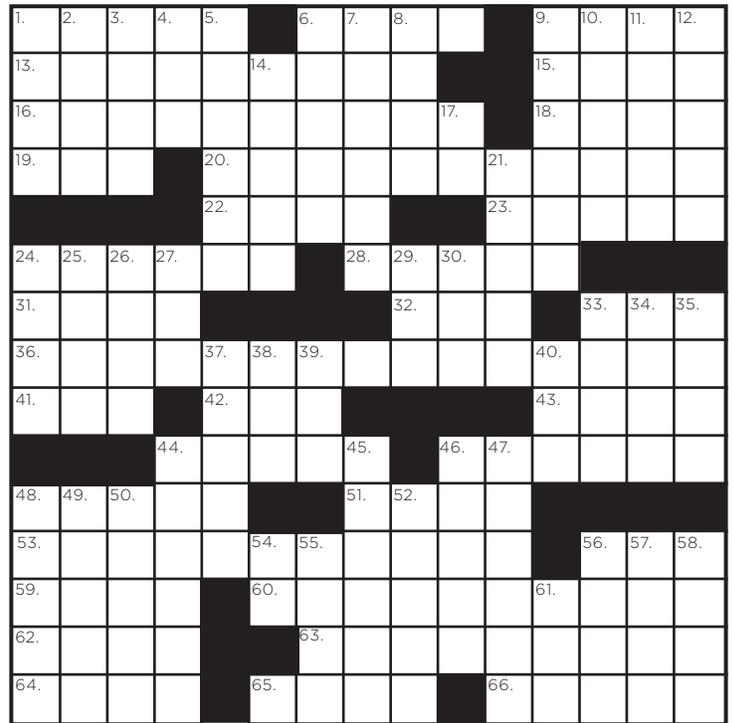
*Sevens* occur in both sacred and secular life and they make repeated appearances in this puzzle. Answers are posted at [www.rshm-east.org/rshm-highlights](http://www.rshm-east.org/rshm-highlights).

## Across

1. A car from an Italian automaker
6. Look(at), wide-eyed
9. Adaptable for alternating or direct current, briefly
13. *Seven sayings of Jesus on the cross*
15. If good, seeds sown in it will flourish
16. Bloodless first man?
18. Evening 12-Step gathering, briefly
19. Army rank above cpl
20. *Pride and covetousness are two of the seven*
22. First Garden
23. Application for an Employer Identification Number, Abbr.
24. *Snow White's seven*
28. One with a halo
31. Yen
32. Hawaiian staple food
33. Existed
36. *Four strong winds that blow lonely, seven*
41. Times New Roman typeface, Abbr.
42. Unit of absorbed radiation
43. He was known for his gold
44. Long hum from a bee
46. *Seven for the brothers*
48. They may be in a swimming pool or a bowling alley
51. Next two states, going directly west from NJ
53. One who leaves a coin under your pillow
56. Whiz
59. Pay tv channel primarily targeting women
60. *Seven outward signs of inward grace*
62. A rose by any other \_\_\_\_ would smell as sweet
63. Small wrenches for roller skaters of old
64. \_\_\_\_-fry
65. Watertown, South Dakota, Abbr.
66. Move without interruption, e.g. from one piece of music to another

## Down

1. Woe is me!
2. Large sharp tooth
3. Confucius: At age 15 \_\_\_\_ my heart on wisdom
4. Cash provider
5. Failing grade repeated
6. Fruit of the vine
7. Supplemental programs that give extra features
8. Test for H S juniors
9. Mind a snake?
10. \_\_\_\_ thru the rye
11. Mother of William & Harry
12. Take hold of
14. Advertisements for Ocean Casino, Abbr.
17. Baby's first word, perhaps
21. Head of Soviet Russia from 1917 to 1924
24. Unto \_\_\_\_ thou shalt return
25. Small brown songbird
26. Gelatinous substance obtained from seaweed, used as a thickening agent in food
27. Latin word for object or thing
29. 'The cruelest month', Abbr.
30. Declaration of debt, briefly
33. \_\_\_\_ child
34. *A Death in the Family* author
35. \_\_\_\_ Gotta Have It, (1986 film)
37. \_\_\_\_ me. I've got this.
38. \_\_\_\_mat
39. Axlike tool
40. Aujourd'\_\_\_\_, today in Paris
44. All my trials, Lord, soon \_\_\_\_
45. Standard antibiotic formulations in packages of six pills
46. Satirical movie about a Kazakhstani journalist
47. Nursery \_\_\_\_
48. Green grounds around homes
49. What a suckling seeks
50. The musical note here is \_\_\_\_; it's FA
52. AC commercial, briefly
54. It follows Elem. Sch.
55. Not eat
56. Blood type, briefly
57. City University abbr. (var)
58. Latin verb 'to be'
61. \_\_\_\_ (out), obtain or create, just barely



Bea McMahon, RSHM

RSHM Highlights is a production of the Communications 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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