



RSHM Highlights

Eastern American Area

Fall 2022

A Beziers Pilgrimage

July 5th, 6th, and 7th, 2022 were memorable days for RSHM, days of prayer as the remains of our Founders were removed from the Mother House prior to its closing.

Sister Margaret Fielding, Institute Leader, addressed the sisters gathered from all Areas. Sisters Rosamond Blanchet and Catherine Vincie represented the Eastern American Area. Sister Margaret's address included the following reflection:

Soon the bodies of Father Gailhac and Mere St. Jean will be taken to the "Cimitiere Vieux" to be laid beside their "daughters," among the people of Beziers whom they loved and served, where they will be more easily accessible to all those who wish to have recourse to them as intercessors with God. At this graced moment, we realize more deeply that for us Beziers is not simply a geographical location, a place on a map, but a place in the heart. It's where Jean Gailhac, recently widowed Appollonie Cure Pelissier, and the first community began the journey in faith, where they walked the streets, hearts burning with big desires and with deep faith and zeal. We will continue to return to Beziers, to have renewal programs here; we will come here as pilgrims, to drink from our Sources, to find inspiration to live our mission today. Beziers will always be that place in our hearts, the place where the dream began.

This house, our Mother House, will soon become available for the mission of the Church in the Diocese of Montpellier, the Church which Father Gailhac loved and served. It will soon be a place of Christian education and formation for the youth of Beziers. On August 28, 1873, Father Gailhac wrote from Liverpool to the sisters here in the Mother House... "this house that is much loved of my heart... the mother house of all the others.... It is from this center that Jesus Christ, our Lord, will spread to all the other houses...."

If Jean Gailhac were to write to us today, he would surely urge us not to be discouraged at this moment in our history, but to rejoice that this house, so beloved of his heart and of the hearts of us all, will open wide its doors



*to the future, so that God's work may continue within its walls. Jean Gailhac would surely encourage us to have the "spirit of Jesus Christ" **firmly rooted** in our communities and ministries today, as it was in the Mother House....*

The image of the vine and branches on the banners shown here was originally painted by Bernadette Crook, RSHM, on the wall of the community room in the Mother House. It vividly symbolizes the hope of Pere Gailhac for his daughters:

"May your roots go down deep into the soil of God's marvelous love."
Eph. 3:17



Bea McMahan, RSHM

Pentecost Homilies of Pope Francis

I have recently been reflecting on the Pentecost homilies of Pope Francis, relishing the light they shed on the presence and action of the Holy Spirit in our lives. He once used the word “flow” to describe how the Spirit functions in the outpouring of God’s love. Yet, it is not always so easy to go with that “flow.”* Augustine in his Confessions asked, “What do I love when I love my God?”* Countless others have asked, “What is love?” Our own starts and stumbles in our torn and tired world may dampen our hope that such love can be made accessible to all.

In his homilies for Pentecost, Pope Francis cuts through the barriers we set to mission with a simple rhetorical strategy: He speaks in practical language of the function of the Spirit as Paraclete, a name that, though ancient, remains rich in its double meaning of Advocate and Comforter. Francis begins with experience, in this case that of disciples in the upper room, stunned and disheartened that Jesus is leaving them. Instead of a reprimand, Jesus understands that they are at an impasse and offers them a powerful promise: “I will send you the Paraclete who will teach you all things.” To help us know what to do, Francis tells us what the Paraclete does. He tells us how the Spirit acts.

Francis begins his descriptions of the Paraclete with the less familiar translation, that of Comforter, a name that recognizes that humans need the “consoler best” in face of the realities of loss, hostility, and death. The Paraclete as comforter dispels any notion of God as distant, imperious, or indifferent. “Closeness, compassion and tenderness” are God’s trademarks, Francis insists.* Our God is near and forgiving and “tends” us with sustained and lasting care. The language conveys with biblical and maternal resonances a reality that humans find hard to grasp: Each one of us is a beloved child of God.*



Though this language consoles, it does not seek in the ways of today’s wellness theories to lead us to our “happy place.” Unlike the comforts of the world that offer temporary relief, the healing of the Paraclete transforms from within and moves us outward toward others, each of whom is also a beloved “child of God.”

We must know God in truth to love God in others, Francis writes. “If we have in mind a God who takes away and imposes himself, we too will want to take away and impose ourselves, but if we have in our hearts a God who is gift, everything changes. If we realize that what we are is gift, free and unmerited, then we ourselves will want to make our

lives a gift.”* But what does it mean in practical terms to make our lives a gift, we ask. Francis tells us frankly that we need help. We do not grow stronger by denying the limits of our finitude. Then he notes that in the Middle Ages the advocate did not speak for the clients but stood by their side, offering them the support they needed to speak for themselves. This testimony can take different forms and may not involve words at all. According to Francis, “The Spirit asks us to embody the comfort he brings, not by making great speeches but by drawing near to others.”* Whether they be near, in the depths of sorrow or at “the ends of the earth,” our personal, collective and ecclesial mission is to make the joy of the gospel available to all.

The homilies of Francis invite further thought, perhaps especially on the discernment needed to proclaim, to give testimony, to witness in our own circumstances and with effectiveness. I have hoped here to encourage others to read them, reflecting on the vision of Evangelization that Francis asks of the whole church and of us. These homilies can clarify and energize us in our mission to “Know God and make God known, to love God and make God loved.”

Jacquelyn Porter, RSHM

Citations: Vatican website- Homilies of Pentecost, Acts of the Apostles, Homily, May 21 2020, Homily, May 23 2021

COMMITMENT TO OUR COMMON HOME

Each year in September, the sisters of the Eastern American Area gather for Missioning Day, a time to recommit ourselves as disciples of Jesus Christ and as RSHM.

On September 17, 2022, Sister Rosamond Blanchet, our Area Leader, welcomed us and introduced the focus of the day: to listen and respond to the cry of the earth in conjunction with the Season of Creation. Beginning on September 1st with the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, and ending on October 4th, the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of ecology, the Season of Creation is an annual global ecumenical initiative. The 2022 theme, “Listen to the Voice of Creation,” calls us to listen to the voices of individuals, communities, species, and ecosystems who are lost to the ravages of climate change. The logo of the 2022 Season is the burning bush, recalling not only the devastation of wildfires, but also the fire that called to Moses which did not consume the bush, but revealed God’s presence.

Our prayer for the day was a video produced by the Vatican, coupling disturbing images of the impact of the climate crisis with calls to action in which everyone can engage. You can view it at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3mCYA0agRF0>. You can also search “Season of Creation 2022” on YouTube for similar videos.

Sister Susan Gardella then introduced Sister Veronica Brand, our RSHM NGO representative at the United Nations, who has attended several UN Conferences on Climate Change, most recently COP26 in Glasgow, Scotland. Veronica offered a powerful presentation on “Climate Change and Its Impact: Global Advocacy and Our Response to the Cry of the Earth.” The statistics are alarming, particularly the rate of increase in carbon emissions and pollution, global warming, catastrophic climate disasters, and the loss of biodiversity which far exceeds the rate of natural extinction. As a result, people, especially the most vulnerable, are suffering from food insecurity, disease, loss of livelihood, and forced migration.

Most upsetting, perhaps, is that industries and governments of the world have long known about the emerging crisis and have failed to respond. Veronica pointed out that in 1999, Sister Marjorie Keenan, RSHM, who was a senior staff member of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace at the Vatican, wrote: “Care for the environment is not one issue among many, it is the over-riding framework for the consideration of almost all the social issues we face today, including such apparently disparate ones as bioethics and war. It is a moral issue with immense economic and political implications.”

Veronica also outlined for us several initiatives by organizations around the world that are working to halt or at least slow the disastrous course we are on, among them the Vatican’s call for a Fossil-Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Following Veronica’s presentation, we gathered in small groups to discuss ways in which we can combat the climate crisis. Suggestions ranged from specifics such as eliminating the use of all plastics, to exploring community resources such as composting, to using our investments for advocacy with corporations. The Area Council will



consider all the suggestions in moving us towards commitments for the year.

We then joined in the celebration of Eucharist and the rite of missioning. Our Area Council anointed each of us with the words: “Go forth responding to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.” A festive lunch followed, and we went forth, “Aware of our interconnectedness with all creation, we proclaim ‘fullness of life for all’ through the integrity of our lives, our relationships with one another, all peoples, and our planet.” (2019 General Chapter document)

Joanne Safian, RSHM



Sister Catherine Vincie presenting at Global Network of RSHM Schools conference.



Susan Kumnick, the new head of the Global Network of RSHM Schools.

THE CONFERENCE OF THE GLOBAL NETWORK OF RSHM SCHOOLS

JUNE 30 TO JULY 3, 2022, ROME, ITALY

Representatives from the nineteen members of the Global Network of RSHM Schools met in Rome, Italy, from June 30 through July 3, to discuss the complex topic of diversity, equity and inclusion within a school context, especially regarding issues of gender. Questions have arisen among students and staff regarding gender diversity, recognition of these differences, support for clubs that might be formed for groups of minority students, and use of gender pronouns. In short, the changing social context regarding issues of gender identity, recognition and respect have found their way into the school environment. Administrators of our schools are faced with specific issues and called to create policies in response to students' concerns. The point of the conference was how to engage with one another on these difficult and controversial topics in such a way to aid administrators in their decision-making and to support whole school communities on this developing topic.

The challenges come from every angle: how to address the parent community which spans a wide spectrum of views on these issues? How to address schools across the Global Network that are confronted with gender issues because of their social and cultural situations? How to bring Church teaching to the topic which is currently only in initial development? How to satisfy students whose views are conditioned by their own limited life experience and who are not yet able to see the bigger picture that schools face among their various constituencies? Perhaps, most importantly, how do we dialogue with one another in a way that a) honors differences among us and yet challenges us to move beyond simple statements of difference to new insight; b) recognizes the developmental nature of the issues; and c) respects the Roman Catholic position on the nature of the human person?

As the opening speaker for the conference, I suggested three approaches to help us dialogue with one another. I began with the consideration of a new term used in cultural studies: *interculturality*. As opposed to internationality or multiculturalism, *interculturality* is the ability of different cultures to interact with one another and thereby mutually enrich one another.¹ I suggested that our tendency is often to react to the different "other" as threatening or dangerous, while the Gospel calls us to view the "other" with love and as an entrée into the image of God in another and into God's own self.

Secondly, I used the story of the Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman as an example of the challenge persons of different cultures pose to one another, and how new insight into a topic and ourselves can be the fruit of a courageous encounter with the "other."

Lastly, I suggested that Pope Francis' call for us to be a Synodal Church gives us models of dialogue that are extremely helpful. Synodal dialogue is the willingness to engage with humility in respectful conversation

1. Antonio M. Pernia, SVD, "Challenges to and Opportunities for Religious Life from the World and the Church of Today," *UISG Bulletin* 146 (2011), 40



Mary Jo Martin, RSHM, the former head of the Global Network of RSHM Schools



Conference attendees

with others, especially those on the margins. It is a process of deep listening to the other, on the one hand, and speaking with courage, on the other. Everyone is given the chance to speak in their own fashion, at their own pace and without criticism. It demands a spirit of generosity and openness to be affected by the experience of another based on the conviction that the Spirit is present and active within each member of the group and all the group together. Another factor is that a “third” thing might emerge beyond the opinions and convictions each one brought with them. The promise of the Holy Spirit implicitly suggests that the emergence of the new can happen.

Other speakers addressed such issues as current teaching on gender identity in the Church; pastoral approaches to deal with these issues; and an historical review of ethical methods of approaching issues of sexuality. While clear answers were not always possible, the conversation among us was rich, respectful, and promising for future exchanges.

Catherine Vincie, RSHM

THAT ALL MAY HAVE LIFE

The RSHM LIFE CARE CENTRE CLINIC, a project of the RSHM in the Zambezi Area, is now officially opened. Located in a high-density neighborhood of Chinhoyi, Zimbabwe the clinic hopes to address the following needs of sick persons:

- Provide outpatient services that will prevent and monitor chronic diseases.
- Combine treatment with health education for both patients and their caregivers, thus enabling them to take charge of their health.
- Regularly visit and provide health monitoring to elderly destitute residents in Chengetenai and Nazareth Shelter, existing institutions in Chinhoyi.
- Provide maternity services: prenatal, delivery, and postnatal.

The dream of a clinic sprang from the visits of RSHM sisters to sick persons in the parish of Musha we Betania in Chinhoyi. These visits made evident the need for education combined with treatment so that elderly stroke and diabetic patients, among others, would be better able to manage their health situations.



L-R: RSHM Sisters Previladge, Carol, Florence, Coltrida, Naomi, Beatrice, Asmina, Plynet and Margaret.

The clinic is envisioned as a concrete expression of the RSHM mission:

**“TO PROCLAIM THAT JESUS CHRIST HAS COME
IN ORDER THAT ALL MAY HAVE LIFE”**

Parishioners from Musha we Betania served on the initial steering committee. Their assistance and advice was invaluable at every step of the construction. The RSHM community in Chinhoyi is composed mostly of young temporary professed sisters. None of these young sisters had experience with construction, but prompted by the RSHM spirit of faith and zeal, they learned through the project. These same sisters also received training during the time of construction and are now ready to serve as administrator, accountant, nurse aide, counselor, and communications/public relations contact.

The RSHM family around the world generously supported funding for the construction phase. Families of RSHM sisters also made donations. To meet the challenge of sustainability it is planned to charge a fee. However, it is also hoped that a fund can be established that will allow a subsidy to those patients who cannot afford the fee. Most older persons, who typically have very limited resources and also suffer from chronic diseases, will require such a subsidy.

A future hope is that health education modules can be continuously screened so that patients can view it as they wait for treatment. The funds for such a technology system are not yet available.

We ask your prayerful support as this project now becomes operative, and perhaps the Spirit will inspire you to support it also with a donation.

A LEGACY OF COMMUNITY

Many would consider Sister Bianca Haglich, RSHM, to be the Eastern American Area's and RSHM Institute's "artist in residence." An accomplished artist and artisan, her creative endeavors include sculpture, painting, drawing, ceramics, marquetry, stained-glass, silkscreen, and weaving. She studied and taught throughout the world. Early experiences brought her to Paris, Rome, Florence and Perugia. However, she was profoundly impacted by her 1968-1969 sabbatical in Finland.

Finland had centers in cities and towns where people could meet, weave and exchange ideas. In addition to the art of weaving, it was the sense of community developed in these centers that appealed to Sister Bianca. When she returned home, she continued to study and teach various forms of art and craft but was committed to creating a center where people could gather, weave, and create community.

In 1977, with the support of Marymount College, she opened the Craft Skellar, located in the old carpenter shop of the school. By 1993, the weaving programs had grown and were incorporated into the college's continuing education program. Sister Bianca continued to offer workshops in the Finnish techniques. People of all ages, faiths and backgrounds attended workshops to learn the age-old technique of weaving. Soon, both college students and adults were weaving together. After Marymount College closed in 2007, Eastern American Province Provincial, Sister Rosamond Blanchet, provided the Craft Skellar with space on the Marymount Convent grounds. Eventually it became known as the Weaving Center when it moved to its current location in 2015, just north of the Provincial Center.

All those who have had the privilege of being taught by Sister Bianca, working with her, and sharing lifelong friendships, see her as a distinguished elder conveying not only a wealth of knowledge regarding weaving, but more importantly a sense of spirit and community. They are committed to ensuring that Sister Bianca's legacy continues – not just by sharing her patterns, designs and teaching methods, but by building and maintaining that sense of community.

Karyn Bovino, a former student, sees Sister Bianca as "weaving the thread that brought us all together." For



more than 40 years, Karyn and several of Sister Bianca's former students, known as the "Wacky Weavers," have met monthly. Sr. Bianca has been an important presence in all their lives, seeing them through good times and bad. While their passion for art brought them together, it is their special bond – fostered by Sister Bianca – that has kept the group energized and united.

Tali Havazelet, who has been weaving with Sister Bianca since 2005, is one of the volunteers who is taking on more of the day-to-day responsibilities of running the Weaving Center as Sister Bianca steps back. "What Bianca has created here is so special," she said. "It's an honor to continue this work." Tali also points to the community that Bianca has created where fellow weavers were generous with their knowledge, supportive and

NOVITIATE.... NEW BEGINNINGS

On September 5th, Sisters Rosemary and Kathleen arrived in Lusaka and were happily welcomed by Sister Coltrida and the Lusaka community. The three pre-novices from Mozambique had arrived a few days earlier. On the 6th, Sister Aelita arrived with the four other pre-novices who had been waiting in Choma and Chivuna. We celebrated our togetherness with a lovely prayer service.

Sr. Rosemary lost no time in organizing our lives and, already on September 8th, we were in “Novitiate Mode.” We held the Reception ceremony for the novices on September 22nd.

We are grateful for the many messages of prayer and support from throughout the Institute.

May Jesus live in us and may we live only in Him and for Him”. Pere Gailhac

Kathleen Murphy, RSHM



encouraging. The Weaving Center will continue to follow the class structures that Sister Bianca established. The Center looks forward to offering in-person workshops once again this fall.

“The craft of weaving keeps one humble, but always on the road to creativity, learning, using new patterns and exploring new yarns. But one needs to find the time to be able to work at this ancient craft. It enriches the individual yet allows for much sharing with fellow weavers. The varied cultures, throughout history, have contributed to the usefulness and beauty of a handwoven piece. It has benefitted the human spirit and continues to enhance and enrich our life and environment.”
(Sister Bianca Haglich, on the Weaving Center’s 40th anniversary.)

All those who have been inspired by Sister Bianca gladly strive to continue her legacy.

Cathy Wilkins
Director, Communications & Advancement



L to R: Petronella from Zimbabwe, Brenda from Zambia, Siteria from Mozambique, Loreta from Zambia, Piedosa from Mozambique, Vimbai from Zimbabwe, and Irene from Mozambique

SAVE *the* DATE

The Weaving Center's Annual Holiday Sale
December 3-4 Noon-5pm
For more information visit
www.theweavingcenter.org

HIGHLIGHTS PUZZLE: Upon This Rock

The themed clues in this puzzle refer to names of popes.

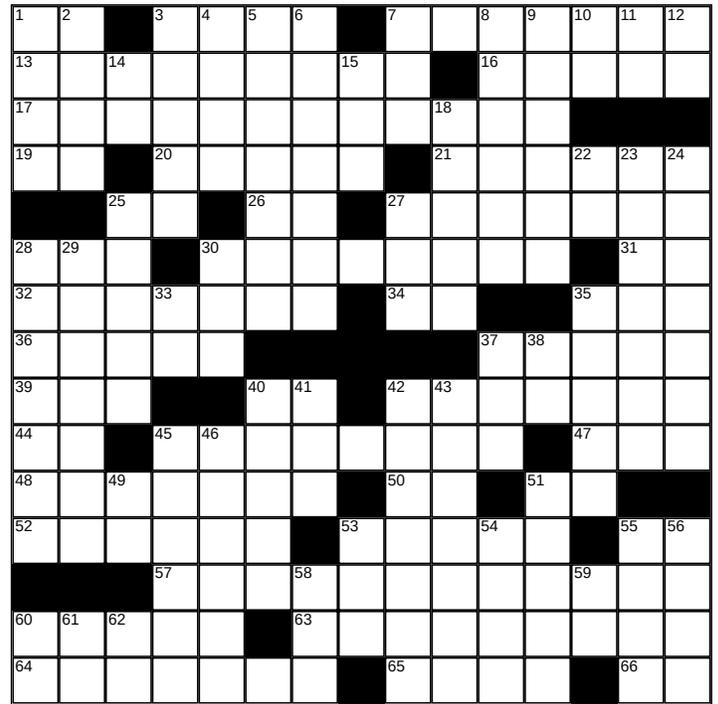
Answers are posted at: www.rshm-east.org/category/newsletter

Across

1. DC counterpart
3. Celt or Scottish Highlander
7. The carrying of a boat
13. *He convened the Second Vatican Council
16. Spooky
17. Fast rate of exchange
19. Resident Asst.
20. Paces of musical pieces
21. Lacking ego
25. Top Secret, military abbr.
26. Roman numeral TWO
27. What I'd do with a leaky roof
28. ___ Miami, TV show
30. *Pope's name meaning 'not guilty'
31. Ma's spouse
32. Lengthier part of a journey
34. Jr. or Sr.
35. Social Security No.
36. Electronic communication
37. What it's about
39. Degrees above BAs
40. Concerning: in ___
42. ___ Brothers, moving company
44. High train, briefly
45. Protest rally in autos?
47. Kilograms, abbr.
48. It may be on late and off early
50. Part time, abbr.
51. Ponce ___ Leon
52. Claws
53. Section of a poem
55. Alcoholics Anonymous, abbr.
57. Publishing again
60. *Pope and saint of the early 20th century
63. One who goes way under
64. Change (a thermostat) to
65. Unit of paper
66. War Office, abbr.

Down

1. Open
2. Final section of a musical piece
3. Tiny pests
4. Rod through the center of a wheel
5. Inspect in detail
6. Walking lamely
7. You may be neat as one
8. Ripped again
9. Golfer's collection
10. Arkansas, abbr.
11. US soldier or veteran
12. Wide shoe size
14. Adam, but not Eve
15. Roman numeral THREE
18. Where enterprises
22. Do not want to go "___ come home"
23. Failing in maintenance
24. *Present Pope
25. Turner and Fey
27. Frigid
28. *Pope's name meaning merciful
29. Country bordering Ethiopia
30. Not well
33. Gastro-intestinal, abbr.
35. _____ Lee, film director
37. Country music TV network
38. Old Testament, abbr.
40. Up the ante
41. Dir. from the redwood forests to the Gulf Stream waters



42. *First Pope
43. Artificial intelligence hogwash, briefly
45. "All my kingdom for _____"
46. Where you want to be on a long entrance line
49. Gallon abbr. (var.)
51. Everyday blue
53. Compete
54. Baking or cream, perhaps

55. All over again
56. Prefix related to soil
58. Insecticide now banned in many countries
59. Roman numeral FOUR
60. Puerto Rico, abbr.
61. That is, abbr.
62. Not them

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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