



RSHM Highlights

Eastern American Area

Summer 2023

Feast of the Sacred Heart of Mary

The Feast of the Sacred Heart of Mary, Saturday, June 17, was a splendid day at Marymount Convent in Tarrytown. The celebration began with a beautiful prayer reflection led by Catherine Vincie, RSHM, with a PowerPoint presentation on the many titles of Mary. The program featured the video “Beyond ‘Women in the Church’: Gender and Ecclesiology Since Vatican II,” presented by Dr. Elyse Raby of Santa Clara University. Dr. Raby reflected upon ways in which, throughout history, theologians and popes have typically described the human body as self-enclosed and defined by its head, to justify a vision of the Church—the ecclesial body—as set apart from the world and governed by the pope.

In our own day, the magisterium’s commitment to gender complementarity reinforces a particularly hierarchical understanding of the Church. Bodies, Dr. Raby proposed, are much more complex than the Church has typically admitted. New reflections on embodiment and gender can open up new ways to envision the Church, its ministry and its relationship to the world. Likewise, Pope Francis’ reforms may bring about a new openness to gender diversity in the Church.

After the video, the sisters broke into small groups for discussion and comments at large. Father Larry Lewis, MM, was our Eucharistic presider, giving us, as always, a vivid homily. In tune with the day’s focus on embodiment, Father Larry told the story of the birth of twins, one of whom was thriving, and the other very weak. An alert and sensitive nurse took the ailing infant and placed her right next to her twin. The vital signs of the fragile little one immediately skyrocketed. This touching image of empowerment through the closeness of a sister was the perfect introduction to the renewal of vows, as each RSHM present expressed her reliance on “...the fidelity of God and the support of my sisters.”

Following a festive luncheon, our celebration of the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Mary ended with a heartwarming event. We are connected with Hearts & Homes for Refugees, supporting them in their efforts to provide assistance to families. Sister Susan Gardella, RSHM, had been working for the prior few weeks with Valek K., a refugee from Ukraine. On Saturday, after our luncheon, she met him to hand over the keys for one of our cars. Expressing his gratitude to all of the sisters, he said that his family has been overwhelmed by the kindness shown to them and by the sisters’ concern for their country. For RSHM, it is a joy and a consolation, as some age out of driving, to pass on the keys to immigrants who will enrich our country’s future, as our forebearers have enriched its past.

Bea McMahon, RSHM



Creating a Synodal Church

Pope Francis is calling the entire Church – laity, religious and clergy – to change our way of being Church, to become a more Synodal Church. He calls us to be a listening and discerning Church: listening to one another, and especially listening to the Holy Spirit as it manifests in prayerful conversation among the People of God regarding what is most vital to the Church at this time.

The Synod process extends from 2021 to 2024 and is divided into a listening phase followed by a two-part Assembly phase to be held in October 2023 and October 2024 in Rome. The first phase began quite unevenly among dioceses in the United States. Some participation was robust, some not. Meetings were held at the local level – the parish, religious communities, or other select groups in the Church – and moved to a national level. The feedback from these initial gatherings was synthesized and passed to a regional level followed by continental assemblies (from Asia, Africa and Madagascar, Europe, Oceania, Middle East, North America, Central and South America and the Caribbean). These assemblies brought together all prior discussions and created final reports which were sent to Rome for the formulation of an *instrumentum laboris* (hereafter *IL*) or working document for the second phase – the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops. At these two Episcopal Assemblies, women and men, religious and laity for the first time will be voting members, as provided by Pope Francis himself.

The aim of the *IL* is to incorporate all previous input into a format that will enable the Assembly “to continue to animate the synodal process in the ordinary life of the Church, identifying which pathways the Spirit invites us to walk along more decisively as one People of God” (*IL* 3). The *IL* is not meant to merely repeat the responses of earlier sessions or serve as a first draft of a final document which will be crafted by Pope Francis. Rather, the *IL* articulates many of the

priorities that emerged from listening to the People of God and expresses them as questions addressed to the Synodal Assembly which “will have the task of discerning the concrete steps which enable the continued growth of a synodal Church” (*IL* 10). The *IL* lists three distinguishing marks of a synodal Church which sound deceptively general (communion, mission, and participation). However, the process of dealing with these major themes through prayer and discussion is concrete, pointed, and even prophetic.

As the *IL* says, the Church is constitutively synodal; it endeavors to be a listening Church, in dialogue with its own members, but also open and welcoming to other Christian denominations, other religions, and the many cultures of the world – although not uncritically. The Synod’s first goal is to make the Church more synodal in its “institutions, structures and procedures” (*IL* 21). The second goal is to address the many issues that surfaced in the first phase of the Synod, recognizing diversity, but not flattening it into uniformity.



Continental Assemblies



Following is a sample of the questions raised:

How can we honor the baptismal identity and mission of all the baptized?

What kinds of formation ought we to have for the laity, religious, seminarians and clergy that fosters participation, communion and mission?

How does the service of charity and commitment to justice and care for our common home nourish communion in a synodal Church?

How do we address the needs and contributions of the poor and marginalized within the Church and without?

How do we include other marginalized people in the Church (e.g., women, LGBTQ+ persons, divorced and remarried, survivors of abuse) as agents in the life and mission of the Church?

How can we revitalize the ecumenical and inter-religious dialogues initiated by Vatican II?

How do we include the experiences of Local Churches in the teaching of the Magisterium and achieve a better balance between the Local and the Universal?

How can we rethink the ordained ministries from a ministerial conception of the entire Church? How can we rethink the role of bishops and the pope in a synodal Church?

How can we better honor the baptismal dignity of women and how can they be included in new ministries, in positions of authority, and in governance?

These questions and many others articulated for consideration by the General Assembly are profound, challenging, and call for conversion through the power of the Spirit. Before 2021 we could hardly imagine even asking these questions; now we recognize that we cannot become a more Synodal Church without addressing them.

The *instrumentum laboris* is available at bit.ly/470anuy

Catherine Vincie, RSHM

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April 30, 2023 was a day of great jubilation at Marymount Covent. With a true friend, Father Senan Taylor presiding, Eucharsitic Liturgy was a joyful highlight, concluding with the following toast for the Jubilarians by Sisters Bea McMahon and deLourdes Mechow:

Our toast is a wish and a prayer that the joys of today may be multiplied in the years to come.

*Beginning with the “youngster” of 50 GOLDEN years, **Ines Gizzarelli**, may the song in your heart ring with the gladness of all the songs you have ever sung, and may you always sense the heart of God beating with your own.*

And to our sparkling DIAMONDS:

Kathleen Cummins, may those beautiful Irish blue eyes continue to shine on all, especially on the little ones whom you teach and cherish.

Kathleen Murphy, forever young at heart, caring for the young of our Institute, may you remain near and dear to us, though geographically far...represented by the trinity of Murphys.

Catherine Patten, may your extraordinary gifts of mind and spirit flourish as you share with so many the Common Ground of faith and love.

Now, last but not least, our revered PLATINUMS:

Anne Considine, ever gentle, ever true, math whiz, purveyor of plum puddings and crossword puzzles, may your generosity come back to you a hundredfold.

John Bosco Gorja, gifting us with impeccable archives and scrumptious meals, may the loving care you have shown be echoed in the loving care you receive in return.

Frances Lane, growing up with four brothers, blessed among men, woman of dignity, equally at home with the highest authorities of our Institute and the neediest immigrants in our land, may the openness of your heart always invite a multitude of blessings.

Elvira Leal, caring for flowers and linens in the House of the Lord, serving in the poorest neighborhoods of Beacon and New York City, may you always find joy in knowing that God is with you.

Andrew Murcia, lover of people and of walking with friends, welcomer of guests, especially through long years at Cormaria, may your winning smile never fade.

Eveline Murray, pastoral administrator, missionary, the work of your hands continues in the church you built with parishioners in Virginia, and in the clinic and school you promoted in Zimbabwe. May your quiet efficiency be shouted from the rooftops of the heavenly city.

Mary Elizabeth Rathgeb, answering to many names...Jean Antoine, Jeanie, Peanuts... your gift for detail served so well in administration at Marymount College and in all you have given and accomplished. May your gift for enduring friendship be a lasting joy.

In closing, along with our Jubilarians we toast all those who have loved them through the years, and we ask our generous God to continue to bless them with cheerfulness and faith in all that is good.



Bea McMahon, RSHM

Marymount Students Living the Call to Serve in the Year of Gailhac



Marymount students are working to challenge, shape, and change the world around them. On Juneteenth, ten Marymount School of New York students and two adult chaperones traveled to the Romero Center Ministries (RCM) in Camden, New Jersey, for an immersive experience of service and transformation. They were joined by three students and one chaperone from Marymount High School Los Angeles. It was an opportunity to learn the differences between justice and charity and reflect on how community service can lead to personal growth and development.

Romero Center Ministries hosts high school and college students from around the country and provides them with unique opportunities to learn about faith, community, and service. Throughout the week, the students experienced different kinds of community service including spending time at a day care center with adults who have a variety of needs, sorting and packing food donations at the Food Bank of South Jersey, cleaning out and preparing a local church to welcome children for summer camp, volunteering at a nursing home, and preparing meals for the Metropolitan Area Neighborhood Nutrition Alliance (MANNA) in Philadelphia. Each of these experiences introduced the students to individuals who were willing to share their stories and help them gain a deeper insight into the systemic injustices that residents of Camden regularly face.

Following their service work at various sites, the students returned to the Romero Center to participate in reflection activities with students from other high schools. These activities provided an opportunity to thoughtfully consider their community engagement and the moments that had the greatest impact for them and held the greatest challenges. They were invited to engage in a daily examen exercise and think about how they could have a significant impact on their own communities back home. Those from RSHM schools had a chance to reflect and pray with one another while discussing their shared mission and history. They

discussed the influence of Mother Butler at both schools and noted her impressive legacy of service and commitment to those on the margins.

In addition to serving the community in Camden, students also had the opportunity to learn about different principles of Catholic Social Teaching (CST). The days were organized around CST themes like the Life and Dignity of the Human Person, the Preferential Option for the Poor and Vulnerable, and Rights and Responsibilities. Their service helped them reflect on these themes and think about how they could integrate these principles into their lives in practical and tangible ways. The program at RCM emphasized living in solidarity with residents of Camden. For example, each person participated in a “food challenge” where everyone bought their food for the day at a local grocery store with only \$4 to spend. They then prepared breakfast, lunch, and dinner for the day on this meager budget and learned about how limited the options are for those who live on government assistance. Everyone also had the opportunity to attend daily Mass alongside members of the parish where RCM is housed, St. Joseph Pro-Cathedral in Camden.

RCM is named in honor of St. Oscar Romero, the Archbishop of San Salvador who was assassinated in 1980 and canonized in 2018. The spirit of St. Oscar Romero plays a significant role at RCM because Romero, like Mother Butler and Pere Gailhac, was a strong supporter of those on the margins, and he actively spoke out against injustices that were being perpetrated against poor, migrant workers.

Serving in the spirit of St. Oscar Romero, Pere Gailhac, and Mother Butler at RCM provided each participant a time of true encounter and transformation. They will continue to seek out new ways to serve those in their communities and take the lessons they learned at RCM to challenge, shape, and change the world in new and different ways.

*Dr. Marianne FitzGerald, PhD, Religious Studies Department
Marymount School of New York*

The Faith-Vision of Pere Jean Gailhac

Part II *This is a continuation of RSHM Sister Clevie Youngblood's synthesis of two writings of Mary Milligan, RSHM, on Gailhac's faith-vision.*

Central to living Love of God is identifying with Jesus. This identification is to be both interior and exterior. It is putting on the mind of Jesus as well as acting as other Christs. For Gailhac, the Heart of Jesus symbolizes His love of humankind. As a loving heart, it is a source of grace for us, a place of meeting, a place to develop our interior disposition in image of Him. Gailhac urges the study and contemplation of Jesus' interior dispositions so as to be in union with Him, to allow His heart to become ours. The founder writes: "Study Jesus Christ, His life, His words, His works; ask Him to allow you to enter into His heart in order to contemplate its sentiments, intentions, love, devotion."¹ Then we must imitate it by reflecting it authentically in our lives.²

The Scriptures are a way for us to know the mind and heart of Jesus and to see the redemptive mission of Jesus in action. They are the work of the Holy Spirit and one of the strongest influences on the founder's spirituality. His preferred texts are the epistles of Paul and the Gospel of John. The former stress identification with Christ and conformity to Him. The latter is the basis of his Christology, which is summarized in the parable of the Good Shepherd. In John's Gospel, Jesus is the one sent to the world in order to save the world (Jn 3:17). As the Good Shepherd, Jesus is the one who knows His sheep, leads his sheep, protects His sheep, even lays down His life for his sheep, in order that all "may have life and have it abundantly" (John 10:10).³ Meditation and study of the scriptures enable us to believe in Jesus' saving mission and undertake our role in proclaiming God's glory and working for the salvation of souls.

To become Jesus' disciples we must imitate Him. Gailhac sees the example of Jesus' life expressed in this quote from the Gospel of Luke: "If any wish to come after me, let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me" (Luke 9:23). The conditions of discipleship, then, are renunciation of self, carrying one's cross daily, and dying with Christ.

For the disciple, these actions are freely chosen. All are required to enter the life of God. Renunciation of our selfishness, pride, and ambition is what allows us to be free. We then are able to "carry" rather than "drag" our cross, that is, everything that causes pain, suffering or humiliation. We are enabled to carry it joyfully. The salvation of humans was accomplished through the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus, the paschal mystery. Disciples of Jesus have the power to enter into the life of Jesus by transforming their daily "deaths" into life. For Gailhac, renunciation is not physical fasting or corporal punishment, but it is the imitation of Jesus' self-giving.⁴ It is done for no other purpose than for the disciple to participate in the work of redemption.

Conformity to the life and mission of Jesus Christ is God's great gift to us. For through us, as through the Son, God's love flows to others. Gailhac's purpose in founding the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary was the glory of God through the salvation of souls. Our participation in this redemptive mission of Jesus requires holiness, that is, a union with Christ. To be a continuation of Jesus Christ in His mission we must be a continuation of His holiness. God's redemptive mission can only be accomplished in Jesus. "Let us be holy, let us work to become more perfect so that we might be better able to win souls for God.... Only saints make saints; one holy person will do more than a thousand tepid ones."⁵ Others will come to know and love God through the holiness and apostolic work of "other Christs."



Gailhac characterizes the desire to participate in God's work of redemption as zeal. It is the "holy fire" with which God filled him. This virtue reveals the unity of Gailhac's theological vision: attaining personal holiness and continuing the work of redemption, all for the glory of God. It is knowing and loving God in order to make God known and loved. Zeal is an effect of identifying with Christ and also a means for achieving oneness with Jesus. Its result is love for God and others; for there is no authentic love of God without love for others.⁶

"Love sanctifies the heart it possesses, but love has its flame (zeal) which seeks to enkindle everything around it.... First you must be holy; ... (and) your holiness must be sufficient to make you an example."⁷

To know and love God, to authentically imitate Jesus, there is no better model than Mary. Gailhac calls her "co-operatrix" in the work of redemption. Her loving acceptance of the Word of God and faithful commitment to that Word mirror Jesus. Her spirit is the spirit of Jesus. Her heart is a heart of love, whose source is Jesus. Not only is Mary the image of Jesus for us but she is our intercessor in the work of our transformation into other Christs. By following Mary, we can bring Jesus to "spiritual birth in all hearts" as Mary brought Jesus to birth.⁸ Gailhac says, "Study Jesus in Mary; the model will be more within your reach."⁹

Jean Gailhac's mission, the mission of the RSHM, is to know and love God, and to make God known and loved. Authentically living Gailhac's Trinitarian and incarnational faith-vision, which is relevant to any age, is how the mission is accomplished. We hear today his words written in 1882: "The heavenly Father, loving the world with an inexpressible love, wished to save it by His own Son and He said to this Son, ...Go and save the world."¹⁰ Making God known and loved is how we can go and save our world.

(Endnotes)

- 1 *Ecrits*, Vol.12, p. 4547, in *That They May Have Life*, p. 124
- 2 Milligan, *That They May Have Life*, pp. 122-123
- 3 Milligan, *Spirituality*, p. 1, 7-11
- 4 *Ibid*, pp. 130-133, 137-139
- 5 *Ecrits*, Vol.11, p. 3692, in *That They May Have Life*, p. 157
- 6 Milligan, *That They May Have Life*, pp. 172-174
- 7 *Ecrits*, Vol.11, p. 3692, in *That They May Have Life*, p. 176
- 8 Milligan, *That They May Have Life*, pp. 177-178
- 9 *Ecrits*, Vol.11, p. 3903, in *That They May Have Life*, p. 177
- 10 *Ecrits*, Vol.11, p. 3733, in *That They May Have Life*, p. 73



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- Milligan, Mary. *That All May Have Life*. Gregorian University Press, Rome, 1975
- Milligan, Mary. "Principal Elements of Gailhac's Spirituality." *Spirituality Series*, no. 1, 1983

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Many thanks for your continued support.

Panel Discussion on Women in the Church at the Sheen Center



In May, Sister Catherine Vincie, RSHM, was one of three featured panelists for the Sheen Center's *The Art of Controversy: Women and the Church*, moderated by Gloria Purvis, host of The Gloria Purvis Podcast from America Media. Sister Catherine joined Susan Timoney, Associate Professor of Practice in Pastoral Theology at Catholic University of America, and Kerry Robinson, Executive Partner with the Leadership Roundtable, discussing the important role of women in the Church throughout Catholic history, the Church's controversial vision of the "feminine ideal" and the movement to expand opportunities for women to participate more fully in Church life, ministry, and governance. Following the discussion, members of the audience were able to ask the panelists questions.

This discussion was quite timely considering the Pope's recent changes to the rules governing the Synod that would now allow 70 non-bishop members, including priests, consecrated women, deacons and lay women and men to participate. Fifty women will be voting members of the assembly of the Synod of Bishops in October.

Over the years, Ms. Robinson has continuously advocated for women to have more leadership roles in the Church – not for their benefit, but for the benefit of the Church. In fact, all the panelists agreed that women contribute many gifts to the Church. However, Sister Catherine emphasized that these gifts are not necessarily related to their feminine, or Marian, identity, but rather that all individuals have gifts to contribute which are unique to her or his personhood. She also shared examples from her experience teaching at a seminary where some of the students were less open to the idea of women's full participation in the Church. She notes that women encounter barriers when they are seen as "other." She posits that we are all People of God and should be seen in that light. Panelists also agreed that the Church is moving in the right direction as it looks to expand women's roles in the Church and has included them in the synodal process.

Sheen Talks at the Sheen Center for Thought and Culture honors the spirit of Venerable Fulton J. Sheen's words and the wise counsel of G. K. Chesterton that an ugly "quarrel" should never interrupt a good "argument." You can view a snippet of the panel discussion at bit.ly/43lR2kl.

Cathy Wilkins

HIGHLIGHTS PUZZLE: Clerical Roles

The themed clues in this puzzle refer to ministerial positions in church hierarchy. Answers are posted at: www.rshh-east.org/rshh-highlights

Across

1. *A chess piece
7. Heavy fog
13. Attack by witches?
14. Former Japanese coin
15. Class below second grade
16. Sealed
19. Less sloppy
21. Individual educ. plans
22. Negative response
25. Station, abbr.
26. Experiences lots of laughs, briefly
28. Superintendent, slangily
30. Wee one
31. Opposite of already: not _____
32. Wander
33. Northeast, abbr.
34. *Ordained minister ranking below a priest
37. Puerto Rico, abbr.
38. Continuing Ed.
39. Center of the universe for an egotist
40. Teacher asst.
41. _____ and greeter
43. Des Moines' state, abbr.
44. Arm or leg
46. Size above med.
47. National Cash Register Co.
51. Oil producing and exporting country, abbr.
51. Fashioned again
54. Ink's partner
55. North America, abbr.
56. ___ Islands off the west coast of Ireland
57. Sour
61. *Flamboyant red songbird
63. "Damn it" without cursing
66. _____, a mouse!
67. Can be toned again
68. Draws back
69. Something to be mailed

Down

1. They shoot little pellets
2. Possible tag on discounted items, abbr.
3. Fly like an eagle
4. House of Detention, abbr.
5. Sign of good or evil
6. *A role coveted by the Women's Ordination Conference
7. Say or read aloud
8. Army Dept. of Energy and Environment
9. Prefix meaning before
10. Small bus or train stop
11. What the CIA may gather
12. Theodore's phone connection, informally
17. Dr. Jekyll's partner
18. Eton Parents Org.
20. Make amends
23. Belonging to us
24. One who dwells in the central part of a country
27. Assn. of Environmental Educators
29. *Alexander _____, English poet
35. Summer getaway for kids
36. One who hugs
38. Dweller on the Isle of Crete

1	2	3	4	5	6		7	8		9	10	11		12
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68										69				

39. Sprayed with tear gas
42. Electronic Guidance System, abbr.
43. Manner in which papers may be arranged
45. Big _____ in London
48. Big attraction for nurses, briefly
50. One who is fishing, perhaps
52. Equal Rights Amendment, briefly

53. Editor's mark for an insertion
57. Shopping aid
58. It may be a candy or a support for walking
60. Not straight, abbr.
62. Eisenhower, informally
64. ___King Cole
65. Island in France

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

Address Service Requested

50 Wilson Park Drive
Tarrytown, NY 10591

Religions of the Sacred Heart of Mary

