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The Life Lived

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The Personal Journey: The Life Lived

Courage et Confiance

St. Madeleine Sophie Barat

Wherever she finds a house of the Sacred Heart upon her road, the Child of the Sacred Heart is at home, since all form but one great family...She will also find that each house is a center where other children of the Sacred Heart work together and help each other in the pursuit of all that is good.

Life at the Sacred Heart

For no one can be educated by maxim and precept; it is the life lived, and the things loved and the ideals believed in, by which we tell, one upon the other. If we care for energy we call it out; if we believe in possibilities we almost seem to create them.

Janet Erskine Stuart, RSCJ

So we must remember that it is better to begin a great work than to finish a small one...the work in the rough...may look ugly and yet be full of promise.... A piece of finished insignificance is no true success...

Our education is not meant to turn the children out small and finished, but seriously begun on a wide basis. Therefore they must leave us with some self-knowledge, some energy, some purpose.... If they leave us without these three things they drift with the stream of life.

Janet Erskine Stuart, RSCJ

The history of the different houses ...has been varied, colorful, and moving. To each one who shared even a brief moment, who helped form part of the great tradition, who in turn was brought into the full stream of its heritage, the experience is rich and deep and treasured. No mere statistical recital can heighten appreciation or increase one's gratitude for years at the Sacred Heart. The daily routine of life does that. But each one has her own favorite memories, her "I shall never forget the time..." her "Remember when?" anecdote.

Do remember when. Never forget the time, for if you do, something precious will have gone from your life...All these experiences belong to you and you, believe it, belong to them.

From anonymous notes found in 1945, at Broadway, San Francisco

Particular effort was made in this section to honor those who took the time to write or to send favorite pieces for consideration. At this point in the journey of creating an anthology, the editors went with the heart. They published what they loved reading and hope the love will be shared.

Grand-Ma's Memories of Mother Rose P. Duchesne

Marie Mercedes Mulhall, St. Charles

The first time I heard of Mother Duchesne was from my Grand-Ma. She was a pupil of this holy Religious and loved her dearly. You know, when we love a person, we also love to talk about them; well, this is the way with Grand-Ma. She has told me so much about Mother Duchesne that I believe it would fill a volume. When Mother Duchesne first came to America, she went to live at St. Charles, but Monsignor DuBourg thought that perhaps if they would go to Florissant they would prosper better. I believe if I were she I would have preferred to stay in St. Charles, but she proposed differently and we find her at Florissant living in a little red brick house, whose surrounding we might picture as a dull painting, surmounted by a magnificent frame. Of course the frame might attract a little attention, so with the surroundings of Mother Duchesne -- their dwelling was not the finest to be had, but nature surely did unfold its self in that beautiful spot. The little stream as it flowed on its way to the Mississippi glistened in the sunlight, and the trees of oak and maple finish the picture. Here Mother Duchesne gave most of her time to Our Lord, because in Florissant the people were not so devoted as those of St. Charles. They thought very little of the Religious, where as in St. Charles, the people, most of them, loved them dearly. Mother Duchesne knew all this in her heart, but she never showed impatience.

Grand-Ma says she never saw such a person; she never complained, and on the contrary she thought everything too good for her. Her humility knew no bounds. For instance, she was heard to say, "Would that I could love God as some holy persons do. I desire, what more can I do?" Grand-Ma also says that she was a very interesting person. Her conversations were so full of grand and magnificent thoughts. Grand-Ma also relates that Mother Duchesne was very

generous, not only in giving alms to the poor but that she was generous in word and, of course, in thought. You would never hear her say an uncharitable word of anybody. She always spoke kindly to and of everybody. She used to go round every night and see that children's clothes were in perfect order. She would even go so far as to mend those clothes that were torn, and Grand-Ma says that she often asked to thread the needle for Mother Duchesne. I might mention that Grand-Ma had the privilege of sleeping next to Mother Duchesne. She says she would never go to bed before ten o'clock and then get up at twelve o'clock and go to the chapel, where she would remain until morning, and apparently you could not tell that she had been up so long. On the contrary, she looked as though she had had a most lovely night's repose. She often told Grand-Ma that she would rather pray than do any thing imaginable. There may be, and are, many other things in the life of Mother Duchesne that I have not mentioned but that are just as pleasing in the eyes of Our Dear Lord, but as I said, all that Grand-Ma has told me would fill a volume, so I will finish my story, but the memories of Mother Duchesne will always be fresh within my heart and in all those hearts that have learned to know and love her.

Sixth Class (seventh grade) composition read at "The Literary," November 18, 1903, fiftieth anniversary of Mother Duchesne's death.

To Rhoda
A Letter from an Alumna of the Nineteenth Century to her
Grandchild of the Twentieth
Rhoda Janet Walker Edwards, Manhattanville, Kenwood, and Elmhurst

My very dear Rhoda:

Your stories of Stone Ridge evoke memories of my Convent Days. The spirit is the same; but how different are the externals. The sterner discipline of the nineteenth century has been relaxed to meet the requirements of the twentieth: "*Tempora mutantur et nos mutamur in illis.*"

Your school is equipped with every modern convenience. You enjoy luxuries unknown to us. On your hockey fields, your tennis courts, and in your spacious gymnasium, you train for the laurels you win in interscholastic matches. You are being educated for careers in a world that no longer discriminates against women. We were brought up not to compete with men but to take our position in the Home and in Society...culture and decorum were especially stressed.

Though I grew to be so devoted to the *Sacre Coeur*, my earliest recollections [at Manhattanville in New York City] are sad ones. I was desperately homesick and would have run away, back to the mother I idolized, had it not been that I could not leave my little sister, your Aunt Nell, whom I loved so dearly. No one can realize all that she meant to me, in my first lonely years, when the bond between us was so closely welded that it held fast all our lives. The following anecdote will illustrate her devotion to me.

She was a beautiful child, the baby of the school, with a quick and retentive memory; and was invariably chosen to represent our *cour* when visitors were entertained. On this occasion, she had recited her poem so charmingly that Reverend Mother called her to the platform to be introduced to the guest of honor, who presented her with a holy picture. Nell took it with a smiling "Thank you" and a pretty curtsy, but, returning to her seat, she stopped in front of my chair, tore it in two pieces, and gave me half. This so delighted the nuns that I have heard the story often repeated.

She was an incarnate sunbeam, loved by everybody. I was a hyper-sensitive introvert, harboring resentment against life, and hiding the hurt in my heart till it festered. I had a violent temper and an obstinacy that won for me, from my schoolmates, the nickname of the red-haired mule. A picture of myself, taken in childhood, shows me with a Mussolini-like expression on my face, in an attitude of defiance ready to fight the world.

In just such a rebellious mood, I listened one Sunday to a sermon on the seven devils, and drew from it inspiration quite contrary to the good priest's intention. I conceived the idea of forming a band of seven devils, who would bind themselves to break all the rules.

We were such little devils that we were only a nuisance; nevertheless the bad example we set the 4th *Cour*, by the defiance we showed when we lost all our notes at *Primes*, could not be tolerated. It was inevitable that I, the ringleader, should be segregated.

I was confined to the dormitory, a large airy room with a view over the city. This public penance, meant as a disgrace, delighted me. Dear kind Sister M---, who was in charge of the dormitory and the vestry, was so sorry for me because of what she considered my disgrace, of which I was not in the least ashamed, that she brought me extra tid-bits with my meals, and better still lent me story books stored in the vestry. I could read when I liked, I could sleep when I liked. I wanted to be left alone. The only one I missed was Nell, and she found ways and means for surreptitious visits. Day after day I refused to apologize. I wasn't sorry, and I was content to remain isolated.

One evening after Sister had brought my supper, she sat beside me telling her Rosary. I watched the work-worn fingers count the beads and the wrinkled face absorbed in prayer. "How kind she had been to me" I thought. When she crossed herself and put away her beads, she began to talk to me. She told me how unhappy I was making the dear Lord by being bad, and then she ended with an appeal to me to apologize, I couldn't refuse her. The next day I summoned my seven devils and disbanded them; so ended the 4th *Cour* scandal.

On one of the visiting days in June, one of the girls, who had been spending the afternoon with her parents, announced that they had read in the paper, that day, that Mrs. M--- had died

suddenly from heart failure. “What name did you say?” I exclaimed. When she repeated it, I stood rigid. Mother C--- gave me a searching look and quickly clapped for silence. “We will form in line to march to supper” she said. As I passed her she whispered: “Wait for me, dear.

In a few minutes Mother C. returned and taking me by the hand she led me to the garden. She said: “I didn’t think you felt like supper just now, Rhoda.” “No, Mother,” I answered; “I couldn’t eat.” Then bursting into sobs I said: “Why didn’t they let me know she was ill. I loved her so.” -- for Mrs. M. was my favorite Aunt and I was her special pet. Very tenderly Mother C. explained that her death had been sudden; that Our Lord had taken her to Heaven without letting her suffer pain or sickness.

“But why did she have to die. Why will I never see her again?” I persisted. Mother C. answered: “We can’t understand why God does things sometimes; but we know He loves us and what he does is for the best. One day we will understand, but till that time comes He asks us to trust Him. After all is made clear to us, it will be too late for Trust.”

As she spoke, we approached the community cemetery and she led me through the gate and up to the foot of the large wooden cross on which our crucified Saviour hung. “Let us kneel at the foot of the Cross”, she said, “and offer a prayer for your Aunt; and won’t you tell Our Lord that you love and trust Him even though you cannot understand.” As I knelt, I raised my eyes to the blood-stained face that looked down at me in pity and for the first time spoke the words I have since so often repeated. “Dear Lord, I love and trust You, even though I do not understand.”

A bell rang and we heard the laughter of the girls coming out to recreation. Mother C. led me through a secluded path to the refectory where Sister had prepared supper for me. “Try now, dear, to eat something.” urged Mother C. “That omelet looks tempting, and the peas and strawberries are from our garden.” She stayed with me while I ate, and when I asked her if she had not missed her supper, she evaded the question.

That night was the beginning of peace in my heart. The next year, I made my First Communion. Vivid as yesterday in my memory are the happy weeks of preparation and the final day of its arrival. I received Our Lord with a feeling of exultation and the morning passed in

ecstasy; but when afternoon came and the others were called to the parlor to see their families, I was left out. My precious mother lived too far away to come to me, and this, “the happiest day of my life,” was saddened. Depressed, I stole into the Chapel for comfort. There, Nell, who had been searching everywhere for me, found me. I was no longer alone. I had my little sister and we spent the day together.

The value of discipline in an emergency was demonstrated to me while I was still a child. One evening, we little ones of the 4th *Cour* had already retired when Mother -- entered our dormitory and bade us dress quickly and follow her. Wondering and excited, we hurried into our clothes and crowded around her. When we reached the corridor leading to the stairway, flames were shooting out in all directions from the roof above us. There were shrieks of terror from the highly strung Latin-Americans, and panic threatened. I can still hear Mother saying calmly but firmly: “Children, we remain where we are till quiet is restored.” The minute that we stood waiting seemed an eternity, but order prevailed, and silently, in single file, we wound our way down the long flights of shadowy stairs, lighted only by the flames that swept across the windows of the landings. I have often marvelled at Mother’s courage, in that tense moment that she held us motionless. Workmen had been repairing the balustrade of the stairs, and to have rushed down it in confusion would have meant certain death. We felt our way along the inner wall, until we reached the ground floor and safety. There we met others, and with them passed through long corridors, meeting nuns carrying sacred vessels and vestments from the Sacristy and the old Librarian, her arms full of books. Firemen had a hard time keeping her from going back time after time to save irreplaceable volumes confided to her care.

Outside the house was a scene of confusion: firemen darting in and out, climbing ladders with long hoses, for the fire had started on the roof. Everyone was salvaging what was possible, for they knew that Manhattanville was doomed. That night I had no realization of this fact; nor had I any feeling of fear. I was too overwhelmed by the stupendous magnificence of the conflagration. In wonder, I watched the flames leap to the sky, reaching, it seemed to my childish imagination, to the very stars, whose light dimmed by comparison. I was emotionally stirred, just as Wagner’s fire

music thrills me today....

How long we watched, I do not know, but the word was finally passed that we would spend the night at Mr. Ottendorfers. He was a kindly man with a beautiful house overlooking the Hudson, which he immediately offered to the nuns in this hour of their distress. When I heard that my dear Reverend Mother was to lead the way I ran to her and took her hand, for the path was rocky, and in our games I had learned the location of every treacherous stone that hurt one's ankle. Reverend Mother accepted my help sweetly though it was she who looked out for me.

It was not till the next morning that I knew that my Manhattanville days were over. Then the glorious conflagration of the night before turned to ashes in my heart. Reverend Mother and the Community must have worked all night, for by morning their plans were made and carried out with the quiet precision to which we were accustomed. All travelling arrangements had been made, different groups were assigned to different convents. There were sad farewells; for many never to meet again.

Thus it was that I went to Kenwood, beautifully situated on a hill overlooking the Hudson River and the Catskills. In the Spring when the ice melted and the river overflowed, we used to watch the shacks along its bank topple over in the freshet and go drifting down the stream.

I have said that vacations were lonely; but at Kenwood they became my pleasantest memories. I was older and had learned something of the philosophy of life as well as the give and take of comradeship. During the vacations, discipline was relaxed and everything was done to give us a good time, even to putting up curtains and installing rocking chairs in our recreation room to give it a home-like appearance. The girls I liked the best were those, like myself, whose families lived too far away for them to go home for vacations, so we made a congenial group.

Never shall I forget one of the hottest summer days at Kenwood. Mother Kiernan was our *surveillante*. She asked us what we would like for *gôûter*. One of the girls said: "Toast and Tea." Mother looked a trifle baffled; "Wouldn't you prefer something cold?" she suggested.

"No, thank you, Mother" we answered; "We'd rather have tea with lots of hot buttered toast." She left us to return bearing tea and steaming platters of hot toast saturated with butter. The

perspiration was pouring down her face, her fluted cap was wilted.

“Oh, Mother,” we asked abashed, “did you make it yourself?”

Looking embarrassed she replied: “It was such a hot day, and Sister had been working over the stove all morning. I did not like to ask her to do it. I preferred to make it myself.”

I fear we sometimes took for granted surprises that entailed hours of preparation; a refectory table beautifully arranged with flowers and favors, even to exquisitely hand painted place cards. I have been complimented often on some unusual touch in my decorations, the secret of which I learned at the Convent.

I must tell you of my last Thanksgiving at Kenwood. It started, as usual, with a visit to the bazaar, where the girls bought the candy they had ordered for the occasion. In those days our finances did not admit of such extravagance, so I was passing the bazaar, with averted head, when Mother Moran, the treasurer, called me in. The room was full of chattering girls. In a severe tone that she had never before used, Mother Moran said: “When you and Nellie order candy, please come and get it. Don’t wait until the bazaar is closed,” whereupon she gave me two large boxes. I started to tell her that we had not ordered any, but she silenced me saying: “No excuses, Rhoda. Leave the room and give Nellie her candy.” Then expeditiously ridding herself of the chattering loiterers she locked her office and followed me.

“Rhoda dear,” she said, “I didn’t mean to hurt your feelings, but I didn’t want those girls to know that the candy was a present to you and Nellie.”

The climax of the day was “The Play.” We did not use the term Amateur Theatricals, for in those days the theatre was looked upon askance; but no matinee idol was ever more popular than Mamie S. That evening we listened breathlessly while Mamie, the widowed mother, pleaded passionately for the life of her only son. We were numb with suspense, when from the rear where the Community sat, Reverend Mother’s voice broke the tension. “Don’t be theatrical, Mamie.”

The strain snapped. No longer were we anguishing with an early Christian mother; we were merely listening to Mamie recite her part.

Reverend Mother’s attitude towards theatricals reminds me of an occurrence along the

same lines, at the *Sacre Coeur* in Brussels. It was at a tennis match, and your mother was playing against Consvieve, the best of the Belgians. The Mistress General stopped the game to admonish your mother for serving hard balls. "Tennis", she said, "is a graceful ladylike game, not a tour de force."

I may add also that in spite of the handicap imposed by the gentle service, your mother won the finals. You may have seen the little gold tennis racket with a pearl for a ball, which she was awarded.

Christmas was my last vacation spent at the convent. How I loved Midnight Mass. Not at the Madeleine in Paris, nor the Sistine Chapel in Rome, has the Infant Jesus seemed so close. With what devotion Madam Bentley sang the "*Adeste Fidelis*," while Mother Shaw at the organ poured out her heart in religious fervor. Dear Mother Shaw, what a friend she was to me. How often when I felt the seven devils taking possession of me, I would knock on her door, sure of a kindly welcome and wise counsel. After breakfast we found our boxes from home under a big Christmas tree, and in the evening the tree was lighted and there were more presents from Reverend Mother and the Community.

When summer came we joined the happy group going home for vacation; and when school re-opened, we transferred to Elmhurst [Rhode Island]. Of the three convents, Elmhurst was the one I loved the best, and I look upon it as my Alma Mater. I went there, not as a frustrated child, but as a young girl, grown adjusted to life, but above all, I not only went home thereafter for vacations, but I saw my beloved Mother twice a week.

The stringent rule of silence, which was enforced except at stated times: in the class rooms, at recreation, and during two meals (at the third someone read aloud to us), was as irksome to us as it would be impossible to your irrepressible generation. The habit of curbing our tongues taught discretion in after life. Even when silence was not enjoined, our conversation had to be carried on in French, except in the English class rooms, at one of the recreations, and at one of the meals. Naturally, the girls rebelled, but what girl would not rather talk in French than not talk at all, so per-force we learned the language. Which reminds me of an incident that occurred in Paris years

later.

I was at a reception, and an American whom I had recently met and I were conversing with the Comte de T., who remarked: "You ladies speak excellent French." Simultaneously we answered: "We learned it at the Sacre Coeur." Then turning to each other we asked: "Where?" We discovered that we had been school mates at Manhattanville, and a long forgotten friendship was renewed.

An even stranger coincidence was my meeting Pepita that same year in another French Salon. Before my hostess could introduce us, Pepita exclaimed: "Rhoda!" With an answering cry "Pepita!" we were in each others arms. Many years before, Pepita's father had temporarily left Spain, during which time the family came to America. The daughters were placed at the Sacred Heart, where Pepita and I were desk mates. These incidents prove that whatever has touched us deeply is never forgotten. It lies buried in our sub-conscious memory but will rise to the surface when the right chord is touched.

You may wonder, when you look at us white-haired, be-spectacled alumnae at Convent reunions, what we were like at your age. I assure you the girls of yesterday were as high-spirited as any of the students today.

Take, for example, your grand-aunt Nell Edwards' escapade when the Bishop drove in state for a formal call at Elmhurst. While he was being entertained, she proceeded to take a drive in his carriage and pair. Imagine the consternation of the nuns when they escorted the Bishop to the front door to find his carriage gone. As they stood in bewilderment, up the drive at a brisk pace, her red hair flying in the wind, came your Aunt. Skillfully she brought the lively steeds to a stop under the *porte cochere* and greeted the Bishop with a smile of supreme satisfaction. The nuns were aghast, but the Bishop was amused; and from that introduction sprang a lifelong friendship between a mischievous child and a saintly man....

Among others who acquired the reputation for being what we called holy terrors" were Pauline Willis and Georgia ---. Pauline developed into a pillar of the Church, she subsequently lived in London, where she devoted her life and her wealth to good works...

In contrast to these stormy *petrolla*, was Anna Woolett, a little flower of perfection, whose lovely statue of an angel, which you may have seen at Noroton, was a marble replica of her own pure soul..

I have lingered lovingly over these characters, because I have met them in later life and marvelled at the splendid women they have become. I had known them when they were clay on the potter's wheel; and by the gentle and skillful molding of the nuns they had been fashioned into vessels of exquisite beauty.

Mere Marie Ange had the most difficult children in her French Class, yet she maintained perfect order. We never knew her full name but the grape vine whispered that she was a princess with such a long title that she discarded it on entering the convent. Some one asked one of the girls who was a weekly recipient of "*assez bien*," why she behaved so well with Mere Marie Ange.

"I can't help it", she answered; "she treats me as if I were a princess too. She doesn't believe I could be rude, so how can I be with her?" A non-Catholic once asked me: "How is it that the Sacred Heart girls, regardless of their backgrounds, have such charming manner?" I might have answered: "Because of the Meres Marie Anges in the Community."

No picture of Elmhurst is complete without mention of Louise Imogene Guiney. I treasure the memory of a week-end spent in Oxford with Louise, who was loved by all, and whose writings were praised by the severest critics. It was at Elmhurst that her talent was discovered; and she was not only trained along that line, but was assisted towards her first publication.

No one took our financial reverses more to heart than old Sister Aberton, who, before entering the Convent, had been in the service of my grandmother. One day at Elmhurst she met my mother. Taking a tiny statue of St. Joseph from her pocket, she presented it to her, saying: "There are folks in this world so ignorant, they judge you only by the clothes on your back; but I know the fine lady you are. Haven't I lived in Judge White's family, and don't I remember the grand mansion your father had, and a grand family it was I worked for; so please accept this statue of St. Joseph. Kape it in your pocket and he'll see that there's always money in your purse."

My mother thanked her, but said that she never knew that St. Joseph was interested in

money. “And why shouldn’t he be,” exclaimed Sister Aberton, “sure and wasn’t he the provider for the Holy Family.” Then noticing a picture on the wall depicting the Holy Family in Egypt, in which the Child Jesus was scantily clad, she added: “To be sure, the little Jesus didn’t need much clothes in them days, for he lived in a warm climate, but now St. Joseph has gone to Heaven, where he knows all the requirements of Good Society.” My mother gratefully pocketed the statue, and thereafter the family adopted as their patron Saint “St. Joseph, who had learned all the requirements of Good Society.”

It was not only our temporal welfare that Sister Aberton watched over, but our spiritual as well. On one of my early visits to Elmhurst, after my graduation, she met me with a troubled face. In reply to my greeting, she shook her head sadly. “What is this I am after hearing about you, Rhoda,” she said. “I wouldn’t have believed it of you, coming as you do from a saintly Catholic family.”

“What have I done?” I asked. She answered: “Sure and they’re after telling me that you’ve given up your religion, that you’ve turned suffragette whatever that may be, God help you.” It was with difficulty that I persuaded her that I could be a suffragette and a devout Catholic at the same time...

How often, during those long years within the Convent Gates, I had yearned to see the great world beyond. God granted my desire. I have travelled far, and lived in many lands. In their Capital cities I have witnessed magnificent religious festivals; but memory always carried me back to Convent Days, with their exquisitely simple devotions, unostentatious as the life of Christ itself.

I remembered the crowning of the Blessed Virgin, and the beautiful feast of Corpus Christi, when the girls, in white uniforms and long white veils, walked in procession, strewing flowers as they passed along the path whereon, under a canopy of white and gold, the Chaplain carried the Sacred Host. Their young voices sang exultantly the hymns they loved, and the music mingled with the perfume of incense, as it rose to Heaven on the sunlit air. Then truly, “*Le Ciel a visité la terre.*”

June brought the roses, but with them the thorns of final examinations. We, in the

graduating class, were given special privileges, among them the permission to study out of doors. How delicious were those first warm days with the scent of lilac along the hedge, and the fresh mown grass on the lawn. What joy to listen to the birds singing in their mating and to hear from the pastures the contented lowing of the cattle.

My favorite spot was a bit of crumbling wall in the orchard, a corner of fairyland when the fruit trees were in bloom. To this day, apple blossoms always bring memories of Elmhurst. I could study better out of doors. I understood why, when Christ was asked to teach His disciples how to pray, he led them up the mountain. I have found in nature answers to other problems than Latin and Geometry. Never, whether on land or sea, do I contemplate a sunset without exclaiming with the Psalmist: "Let everything that lives praise the Lord."

At last came the day of graduation, with its bustle and excitement. Community and children foregathered in the study hall, where the no longer needed desks had been removed and palms lined the walls. We marched in to the strains of music and took our seats with eagerness to hear how the prizes had been awarded. When the hard won laurel crowns had been placed on the brows of the graduates, and the final sentence of the Valedictory echoed through the hushed room, the shadow of sadness fell over us.

Our Convent Days were over.

Only left were the final hours of farewell to the nuns; who had done so much for us; whose example had stimulated us to higher ideals; whose gentle admonitions would continue to vibrate in our hearts, like messages whispered in an hour of need.

When I said good-bye to Mother Ward, she gave me a parting gift of three words of wisdom: "let it pass" – precious words that have saved me much unhappiness and many an unbroken friendship. She said that I was going out into a world where I would often be hurt by thoughtless deeds or words unkindly spoken. "Those are stumbling stones on life's path," she said, "why go back over them. Let them pass."

When the bell rang to call us to our last Benediction, I took my place, as First Medallion, at the head of the procession to the Chapel. I thought back on the frustrated child who had sought an

outlet for her emotions in her band of seven devils. What a long way off that seemed. Led by the kindly light of the nuns, I had found my way up a steep and shadowy path. Now I would pass out of the Convent gates to another world, prepared to meet the challenge that lay beyond. I entered the chapel and turned into the pew that would never more be mine. As I knelt, a tear glistened on my Child of Mary's medal; and when the priest raised the Ostensorium to bless us with the Sacred Host, I prayed that God would repay to the *Sacre Coeur*, the debt I owed the dear nuns for all their loving care.

Rhoda, dear, this has been an overlong letter. These memories have been stored away all these long years in my mental wastebasket; and you have drawn them out.

Some day you will recount your reminiscences to your grandchildren; and you will say, as I say today, in closing my letter: "I thank God for my precious heritage, the privilege of having been *un enfant du Sacre Coeur*."

Your loving,
Grandmother

This selection was abridged for the anthology.

Excerpt: Memories of an Old Girl

By Louise Imogen Guiney, Elmhurst

Moi qui vous parle was the twelfth applicant on the new foundation at Elmhurst, which had already started on its second year. They gave me the number twelve, which I didn't like. I said it was "too Judas-y." On the hot August day when I first saw the place, I made the journey from Boston rather unwillingly, in the wake of my mother. I had made up my mind that I had no use for Convents anyhow; so to comfort and fortify myself, I carried my best blue gun and a collection of agate marbles in my pocket. Very often since have I been reminded of that gun – coming thus armed to the spot where I was to spend six very contented years! What quite decided me to agree in being sent to that school the next September was nothing less than Madame, not Mother, Samuella Shaw. The temporary Superior, Mother Major, had kissed me; Madame Lizzie Lake had shown me a picture-book; Madame Marie Ange (in whose particular charge her friend, my dear father, afterwards put me) had betrayed quite a lively interest in the unloading of the gun; but such blandishments did not go far. What did go far was my being taken into the old garden, where there were high and overgrown box hedges: just Madame Shaw and I alone. There the demon of mischief got into her worship, bless her! – she was a young nun, and full of life... – and leading a chase into one of the orchards to get me some early apples, she twice took the wide box hedge in a graceful leap, with my long thin legs enthusiastically following. (Gymnastics are still nearer my heart than most things are.) I was but eleven, and I judged everything, male and female, by its capacity to jump, run and swim. She didn't know that, but she broke down, by that one flight in the air, all my objections to a contemplative life. When we got back to the drawing-room I announced to my parents, giving no reason for my

conversion, and stacking the gun in the corner: “I’m comin’ back here to stay. I like nuns, like ‘em awfully!” So in September I duly settled down in the Fourth Class....

Louise Imogen Guiney was a noted poet of the late nineteenth century. Special thanks to Kenneth Faig for enthusiastically sharing his illustrated and annotated edition of Miss Guiney’s entire 1907 talk to the alumnae of Elmhurst.

School Days 1944-1950

Agnes Rutledge Hanford, 91st Street, 1945, Newton College, 1950

I arrived at the Convent of the Sacred Heart at 91st Street and Fifth Avenue at the beginning of September 1944. It was my last year of high school for I had spent my first three years at a private Catholic academy on Long Island. My mother, with me in hand, had called upon Mother Jane Saul early that August. After a long interview in the Convent's formal parlor that hot August afternoon, Mother Saul said that she would accept me in the school that September. It was a rare occurrence, and it was one of the most important events of my life.

I loved it from the first moment I arrived at the school. I was thrilled with the daily outdoor ride on the double-decker Fifth Avenue bus up from Penn Station to 91st Street, and I was happily overwhelmed by the grandeur and beauty of the Otto Kahn mansion. It seemed to me that I wandered around endlessly those first few days from class to class, to the exquisite darkly paneled library, then on to the great medieval stone study hall, on to the grand white and gold Adam period ballroom, the perfect chapel, and on through the long stone corridors that led to the classrooms.

Mother Saul had asked Basilia Welch that first day to help me find my way around the building. Basilia took me to all my classes, and, though she was one class below me, that September day was the start of a lifelong friendship. Extra scope was what I think I first acquired at the Convent. It was a new and interesting world of French with a good French accent, Latin in a lovely upstairs classroom looking out on Fifth Avenue and Central Park, wonderful poetry and literature readings, exciting history lessons, the challenge of creative writing projects, and the all important essay writing that not only had to make some literary sense but also had to be well-written. Last but certainly not least, we had excellent instruction in the Catholic faith, with heavy injections of the writings and ideas of Cardinal Newman, Monsignor Ronald Knox, the literary Sheeds, and many of the great Catholic writers of the nineteenth and early twentieth century.

Jane Saul was a remarkable woman, small, elegant in manner, beautifully educated,

usually soft spoken with her brightness and personality sparkling in her eyes, coming right out to meet you from the recesses of her black and white habit. She was quiet but always busy, seemed to be everywhere at once, clever and peppery in conversations, and always interesting. She was a major force in the school, and I admired her tremendously. She made a deep and lifelong impression upon me.

I came down with appendicitis and pneumonia the following fall and winter so I entered college in September 1946 at Newton College of the Sacred Heart, a few miles outside of Boston. I was a member of the first class of Newton College, and I had a wonderful four years there. The Dean of this newest Sacred Heart school was Mother Louise Keyes, a woman of enormous personal character combined with great intellectual strength and brilliance. Mother Keyes had studied at some of the great educational institutions, not the least of which was Oxford, and she was the perfect person to be the driving intellectual force for the new college. She was a deeply religious woman, interested and informed on many subjects, and at this particular moment, very involved in the new postwar Roman Catholic liturgical movement. Tall, thin, somewhat ascetic but very approachable, she seemed to be in a constant state of productive movement. The tiny chapel that she created in one of the stone-covered basement rooms of the old Schrafft mansion (now Barat House) was beautiful and a living testament to her faith in God and her unflinching taste.

We had a wonderful mix of educational opportunities at Newton. The college offered Greek, Latin, French, Spanish, German, and, I think, Italian. We had courses in Dante, Shakespeare, Moliere, Racine, Goethe, the Constitution of the United States, the short story, history of art, chemistry, physics, advanced math, logic, ethics, religion, the great philosophers, and so much more.

There were about thirty-five girls in the first class at Newton. We were all about seventeen, and so on one Sunday afternoon in late October, under Mother Keyes' efficient management, the first tea dance at Newton College was held. I was the social chairman that first year, and as Mother Keyes and a few of the other nuns hovered discreetly in the background,

thirty-five nervous and prettily dressed, young ladies greeted the pride of Boston College, Holy Cross, and Newman Club members from Harvard, MIT, Boston University, and Tufts. As the cars pulled up to Barat House that late afternoon, nice-looking young men walked warily but firmly into the lions' den; the four piece combo was playing Cole Porter in the paneled drawing room, and we were off and dancing.

Mother Coleman was the librarian of Newton College and what a delightful woman she was. A daughter of the South (Virginia), she had all the charm and innate breeding found in so many of a certain type of Southern lady. Her domain was the beautiful paneled library of the mansion, one room down from the drawing room going toward the handsome main foyer.

The library was not a large room, and there were library stacks downstairs, but somehow we seemed to have so much of what we needed in that small room. The paneled shelves were lined with the classics, history, philosophy, research material, current periodicals, the New York Times, the local Boston papers, and, of course, Catholic papers and periodicals. Mother Coleman demanded silence in her library, but even when she was most severe in her demeanor, you felt unthreatened. She was always interested in what her girls were doing, and she was frequently on duty when we returned from our weekend dates. I remember her so well, smiling, and chatty with all the young men as they brought us home on those cold winter nights.

Spring finally came to cold, dark, and damp Newton and Boston. The handsome leaded windows were rolled open, tea was held as usual at 4 p.m. in the now brighter blue skied muraled sunroom where the gorgeous painted tropical birds on the blue walls seemed to greet the new season with us. As the days became longer, we often adjourned in the late afternoon with our books to the green lawn near the cherry trees in front of Barat House or to the top of the hill behind the mansion that sloped down to a small green meadow below. The Second World War was truly over, and the girls of Newton College of the Sacred Heart Class of 1950 were the early beneficiaries of the peace and great prosperity that followed.

Kenwood Memories

Marguerite Tate Taylor, Kenwood/Doane Stuart, 1957

Thirteen years of my childhood, from ages four to seventeen, were spent as a student at the Academy of the Sacred Heart at Kenwood in Albany, New York. Some of my classmates had to wait decades before they realized that those years were golden ones. These were the girls who chafed at the discipline and longed to be at home. My own experience was happier, perhaps, because I was a day student in a school that was composed of mostly boarders. This allowed me the best of both worlds, and my only real complaint was that my treasured "blue ribbon" had to be a different shade of blue than my boarding schoolmates.

My earliest recollections of Kenwood are of days in the Junior School, with its tiny furniture in small classrooms and the big study hall and huge playroom. Every morning we had fifteen minutes of recreation on the "bridge" that separated the main building from the novitiate. I loved to lean against the walls of the bridge and look out over the countryside. In Junior School, we each had a little garden plot to tend; this was a real thrill for a little city girl. Kenwood had a working farm. We drank milk from our own cows and complained about the taste every spring when the cows ate onion grass! We ate stewed rhubarb and rhubarb pies made from fruit grown in the convent gardens. In winter we skated on a frozen pond that was in the middle of a field where cows grazed the rest of the year.

Although the names of some of our teachers have faded away, their faces and their kindnesses, as well as their strict discipline, remain etched in my memory. I recall the excitement that *congés* always brought and the celebration of the Feast of St.

Madeleine Sophie and the preparation for Feast Wishes. I remember the anticipation during Advent when, every morning, if we had been good, each girl was allowed to move a little ceramic lamb up a *papier maché* hill toward the stable where the Baby Jesus waited. It would have been a terrible thing not to arrive at the top just before Christmas. December also brought the Lily Procession, a beautiful solemn celebration of the feast of the Immaculate Conception. The memory of that line of little girls in crisp white dresses, white gloves and veils, each carrying a lily with her elbow bent at exactly waist height made an indelible impression on me.

As the days went on, we learned the social graces as well as the academic subjects. We learned the proper way to curtsy before Reverend Mother and the Mistress General and the correct way to genuflect. We learned to stand immediately when anyone entered our classroom and we learned to walk in straight, silent ranks. Most importantly, we learned to live a life of self-discipline and prayer. We gradually learned fidelity to duty, submission to authority, loyalty, self-giving and good manners.

Days of Junior School, with flowered pinafores worn over our uniforms and daily recitations of catechism and poetry, gave way to the Lower Senior School as we began Sixth Grade. It was always difficult to explain to friends who did not go to Kenwood that Sixth Grade was called "Seventh Class," and Seventh Grade was called "Sixth Class," while Eighth Grade was "Fifth Class." Transition to the Lower Senior School was not as difficult as it might have been, for unlike our counterparts in other schools, we were already used to having different teachers for various subjects. One mistress had our class just for Christian doctrine, another for arithmetic, another for French, another for art, and another for music. The mistress with whom we spent the most time was our English

teacher. We had class with her in the morning and again in the afternoon. The subject matter included spelling, poetry, reading, literature, writing, history, geography, and politeness.

Once a week a woman came up on the train from New York City to teach us Diction. We all thought that was great fun but a bit silly. There was no such subject as physical education, but we had "recreation" for an hour every afternoon, following *goûter*. For recreation we wore belted red tunics over white shirts and red bloomers. In the Lower Senior School we learned to play field hockey in fall and basketball in winter. We also began to take part in essay contests and plays.

The most memorable event of 1953 was the Kenwood Centenary Pageant, celebrating one hundred years of Sacred Heart education in Albany. We practiced and practiced our French so we could properly welcome the Superior General, Reverend Mother deLescure.

Senior School life began as we entered First Academic. Logic, philosophy, Latin, and general science were added subjects. We were allowed to participate in the Glee Club and Dramatic Club and the Sodality of the Holy Angels. Our social life consisted of two tea dances each year with young men from Cranwell Prep School in Lenox, Massachusetts. This was always a scary experience as we girls lined up on one side of the room and prayed that one of the braver boys would come over and ask us to dance. After each dance, one or two of us would find ourselves corresponding with a Cranwell boy. Athletic competition often grew fierce between the two school teams, the Reds and Whites. Some students had the honor of membership in the "Committee of Games," an organization composed of the best athletes. Once in a while we played hockey or

basketball against another local private school or a visiting Sacred Heart school. We always looked forward to overnight trips to play against a Sacred Heart team such as 91st Street in New York City, Prince Street in Rochester, or Greenwich in Connecticut.

We still enjoyed *congés*, especially when we were allowed to go out in the dark to play an exciting game of "loup." My favorite place to hide was in the barn. Each October we had a corn roast up on one of the hockey fields. That was my first experience in sitting around a campfire, toasting marshmallows and singing.

Our school uniforms changed a bit over my thirteen years at Kenwood. The daily uniform was always some kind of navy jumper worn with a white blouse and brown oxford shoes. The Sunday and evening uniform at one time was a gray jumper with red piping and later a black watch plaid jumper. These were worn over a white French-cuffed blouse and with black low-heeled pumps. We also wore navy blazers. For special occasions, like the Lily Procession, our uniform was a pretty white cotton dress.

Monday mornings brought *Prîmes* with white gloves and hearts beating loudly as we presented ourselves before Reverend Mother to receive, hopefully, our blue *très bien* cards. The most-heart pounding event for all of us was Oral Exams, held twice a year before Reverend Mother and most of the religious community. Written exams and Vicariate tests were nothing compared to this.

In the middle of my senior year (Fourth Academic), I convinced my mother that I needed to become a boarder. I was beginning to realize that my happy years at Kenwood were about to end. The thought of leaving my friends and all the nuns, who were like mothers to us, was overwhelming, and I wanted to spend as much time as I could in this beautiful second home.

I would walk through the halls, memorizing pictures, statues, furniture (especially in the parlors and library.) I sat in the magnificent Gothic style chapel, with its finely stained-glass windows and beautiful white marble altar, and regretted the fact that I had ever complained about getting "chapel knees." I listened intently whenever I had the opportunity to hear the novices' choir, their voices blending like angels. I walked outdoors, soaking in each precious spot of the 1,200 acre campus: the fountain at the front of the school, surrounded by crocuses; the Grotto where Mary was crowned every May; the terrace; the ginkgo tree by the Novitiate; the quaint little cottage known as the Vicarage, which had housed a family of Hungarian refugees; and the brick ranch style chaplain's house. I walked down the Kenwood hill, to the gatekeeper's ancient home and then up to the Ave Maria. Once it had been a parish school, but in my years at Kenwood it served as a library for the novices and faculty. Today it exists no more. I covered the hockey fields, the tennis courts, the Junior School playground, even the cemetery, and a special gathering place in the woods that we called "Pooh Corner." I stopped by the spring that ran under a little wooden bridge where, after many a game, I'd kneel with cupped hands to quench my thirst with its delicious icy cold water. I listened intently to the tolling of the chimes in the clock tower.

I lay in bed at night, straining to hear the whistle of a train in the distance and the even breathing of my roommates. I suddenly realized one evening in May that we would never be together like this again. The thought was almost too much to bear; I felt like part of me was dying. As much as I looked forward to college, the unknown future did not seem nearly as inviting as my safe and secure life at Kenwood. I did know, however, that no matter where I went, I was safe in my Father's hands.

The love of learning and the training I received at Kenwood has stayed with me all through life. After college, graduate school, a teaching career, marriage and raising a family, I was fortunate enough to celebrate a thirty-fifth and fortieth reunion at Kenwood, now known as The Doane Stuart School, with most of my former classmates. We have had some wonderful times, wandering through our alma mater, visiting some of our remaining mistresses, and catching up on each others' lives. We have come to realize the wonderful opportunities we had as members of a great family, children of the Sacred Heart. The values we learned at Kenwood have stayed with us throughout our lives. We all agree that those character forming days were indeed among the best in our lives.

Welcome Home

Irene Ernst Mackenroth, Rosary, New Orleans, 1954

I am filled with a sense of joy, accomplishment, and nostalgia as I look back on my Sacred Heart experience. Forty-nine years ago, I came through the front gates of the Rosary in New Orleans a frightened teenager. But, as I walked in, Our Lord came to me and said, “Welcome Home,” and Home is what the Rosary has been ever since.

It was here that I finished my formative education in a way that prepared me for a career certainly unimagined at the time. Here I learned the magnanimous love of the Sacred Heart, a patient, enduring love that ultimately drew me back to the Church and my precious, yet ever so fragile faith in the unfailing mercy and love of God...And, oh...what fun memories I have!

...Since my graduation in 1954 I have tried to give back in some small measure for the privilege of being called a ”Child of the Sacred Heart.”

Growing With God

Ruth McCann, Greenwich, 2005

Since I first began attending Convent of the Sacred Heart, Greenwich, I have grown in so many wonderful ways, but I feel that my growth in my relationship with God is the most important of all.

When I first came here to Sacred Heart, I was only five years old and without much religious education. My parents took me to church, but I did not understand a lot of what I heard. Religion class was a new experience for me. Our religion teacher, Mrs. King, was very warm and loving and made us feel at home while she taught us. She worked with us on the most important concept of all, that Jesus loves us unconditionally. She also supplemented our education by letting us re-enact various Bible stories. We did so much, meditating, creating projects, and learning prayers. Religion class was a time all of us looked forward to.

During the years that followed, the whole student body would attend liturgies together. Somehow, Mass was much more meaningful to me because I understood more of the Mass, and I was there with my Sacred Heart family and with God. We would have special gatherings in honor of St. Madeleine Sophie Barat and St. Rose Philippine Duchesne. I learned all about these women and viewed their immense courage with awe and their love of God with admiration. I wanted so very much to share in that special relationship these women had with God.

Another one of the factors that motivated me to find God was the Religious of the Sacred Heart who taught at our school. They were women whom I admired and who were my role models. They taught me that God's love was pure and unconditional. They had such strength, love, courage, faith, and hope. I saw how much these women loved God and how much God meant to them. I wanted to be as loving and wonderful as they were. I saw that

God must truly be a fountain of inner, spiritual joy, and I yearned for the happiness they felt in knowing God.

I then began my quest to find God. I brought out the booklet of prayers that our religion teacher had given us and looked through it. I said one of those prayers each night and then asked God to protect those I love and give hope to those in need. I also started to read the Bible. In school, I paid more attention in chapel and in liturgies and prayed more and with sincerity. After a while, I began to feel peaceful and full of love when I prayed. I prayed more and sometimes I prayed just to feel God's presence and God's love.

Since I have begun my relationship with God, I have been thinking more about the way Christ acted and the example that He set for us. And now, before letting myself say anything, I try to think if that is the most loving thing to say. I know that God will always be there for me. There is much more that I have to learn, and there are many ways in which my relationship with God will grow. The Sacred Heart family has helped me in so many ways to find God, but not just through religion classes. Each aspect of Sacred Heart life ties in with God, His love, and following the examples that He set for us. Also, we are taught to be kind, to be filled with love, respect, and hope. I am truly grateful to Sacred Heart for helping me to know and to love God and to be a better person. Here I have learned more about everything than I have anywhere else, for what better place is there in the world to learn than in your home with your beloved family?

This was the winning seventh grade essay in the Bicentennial Essay Contest sponsored by the Network of Sacred Heart Schools.

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Not Just A Grade School

Rachel Beck, St. Charles, 1995

There will always be a very special feeling I get when I remember my grade school, The Academy of the Sacred Heart in St. Charles, Missouri. I know I am the person I am today because of the challenging and nurturing experiences I encountered in my nine wonderful years there.

From the first day of kindergarten, when I was five, to the day I graduated, the faculty opened their arms in welcome, taught, and devoted themselves to me each day. My teachers taught me much more than basic arithmetic, science, and English. They taught me strong morals, responsibility, respect, and a love for all. Sacred Heart helped me discover who I was and what I could be and gave me a confidence in myself to strive and achieve...

...The friends I had, and keep to this day, are the best people I know, and the Academy is what brought us together. I am very fortunate that I attended this school and was able to take part in the tradition that is ingrained in Sacred Heart. The powerful bond I have with the students and teachers I met there is everlasting...

For nine years I was secure at Sacred Heart. It was very difficult to leave behind the place that had so tenderly taken me in. After a while, I realized that I shall never actually part from Sacred Heart. I will always hold the memories of this school in my heart and always be welcomed back with open arms. The Academy was not just a grade school; Sacred Heart was a home that took me in each day and filled me with a knowledge of love and life.

From a paper written for a college composition class, submitted with permission by Rachel's grateful mother.

The Journey Toward Active Service

By Anne Hickey, Duchesne, Houston, 1999

"Let's all sing the first two verses together as a class right now. When we have finished, put these sheets in your binders and save them for another day." Our voices cracked and broke as we tried to follow Sister Karam's melody. By the second verse, however, our voices melded together in a melodious tune: *"Still the nations curse the darkness, still the rich oppress the poor; still the earth is bruised and broken by the ones who still want more."*

The first step in my journey toward active service was exposure. As a freshman and a sophomore, I dabbled in service work. My classmates and I painted houses, visited the sick in nursing homes, and played dominoes with the elderly. Many times I felt that I was tossed into these uncomfortable experiences. I considered myself someone who does not relate well to old people or who has trouble being with small children. I learned then it was because I had never been in situations where I had to adjust. I made decisions to adjust rather than sulk. Rather than just sit with old people for the next five hours, I made efforts to practice what little Spanish I knew and to learn about their grandchildren.

One Saturday, a group of us participated in a house-painting project. We arrived at the site, armed with brushes, scrapers, and cans of paint. I thought we could paint and leave. What I learned that day was the horrible conditions under which some families are forced to live, and I also learned that service work can make your muscles sore at the end of the day. *"Show us Christ in one another, make us servants strong and true; give us all your love of justice, so we do what you would do."*

In social justice class, the education portion of my journey took place. We studied homelessness, capitol punishment, child prostitution, and welfare. I did an in-depth study on sweatshops, focusing on neighborhood locations. Social justice class caused a surge inside of me. Finally I knew the causes of homelessness, I knew the statistics for child prostitution, and I knew which corporations operated sweatshops. I felt that my knowledge was empowering, and I felt so fortunate to finally understand these problems. Letters were written to senators, and dinner table discussions switched from talk of school to talk of problems with the government.

At the same time, however, there was a tugging at my sleeve. I was involved in another type of service project. This social work entailed teacher's assistance with mentally retarded children. As a teacher's aid, I spent six months decorating the classroom. I was in charge of the bulletin board, and I took special pride in rotating it with the changing holidays. On the exterior, I appeared to be doing a good job. But on the interior, I wrestled with a sharp fear. That same feeling of discomfort crept over me. All too familiar, it was the feeling I got when I had worked with the elderly. I was uncomfortable, and I would have to adjust.

One day, after months of diligent coloring, I looked up and stared at Kevin. His dull brown eyes stared listlessly off into a void, seeing everything but registering nothing. Daniel had such smooth olive skin. Out of his chin peeked black facial hairs. Clearly his body had not stopped developing where his mind had. Brandon moved his head about, as if he was answering to unheard voices. Roshandra seemed like a regular seventeen-year-old, trapped in a highchair. It would be a lie to say that I could relate on some level to these children, most of whom were my age. They seem barely to know that I was sitting

next to them, playing with their hands, or reading to them. The experience was altogether frightening, but challenging. It made me uncomfortable, in a way that I miss now. We all deserve to be made uncomfortable from time to time.

As my senior year rolled by, my classmates and I found ourselves in the woods, on our senior retreat. We were gathered to perform the last act of service that Duchesne required. As we knelt in front of the basin, we washed the hands of our friends, those individuals who inspired us to live the goals of the Sacred Heart. Once again, a familiar tune floated in my head. *"You shall be the path that guides us, You the light in us that burns; shining deep within all people, yours the love that we must learn for our hearts shall wonder restless 'till they safe to You return; finding You in one another..."*

It is hard to describe the overwhelming warmth that I receive through service. It is also hard to distinguish a point in time when I first noticed that feeling. I hear the stories of others, how they were called to serve the needy, and I am always fascinated by their tales. But when I look inside myself, I become increasingly more fascinated by the impact service work has made in my life. I feel that Jesus and I are working side by side at Loaves and Fishes, serving salad and dishing beans to the hungry. It sometimes alarms me how fulfilled I feel.

In the dusk of my life at Duchesne, as I look on toward my future and the role service will play in my life; I am fascinated by what the Sacred Heart has done for me. I feel like somewhere, along my journey of service, a tiny seed was planted. I cannot really distinguish what point in time it was when I actually became "impelled to act." My experience has taught me that service goes beyond the actual work. I have grown to learn that service is the way people conduct themselves, the choices they make that direct the

attitudes by which they perform the work. But more importantly, service, I have learned, is a lifelong journey. We grow and begin to understand ourselves a little more with each project we undertake.

And the tune keeps playing.

Haugen, Marty. "God of Day and God of Darkness." Song. G.I.A. Publications, Inc., 1985.

Making A Difference

Meredith Keller, Bloomfield Hills, 1999

Before Susan B. Anthony spoke out for a woman's right to vote, before Gloria Steinem defended a woman's social purpose on the pages of *Ms. Magazine*, before Ally McBeal proved that a woman's intellect should not be judged by the length of her skirt, St. Rose Philippine Duchesne founded the Schools of the Sacred Heart in America and proved that women could be educated to make a difference. St. Philippine recognized the incomparable strength in a young woman's potential. As students of the Sacred Heart, we are the living products of St.

Philippine's dream. Our present actions reflect the success of our own beginnings, and our continued commitment to Sacred Heart's founding goals will enable us to influence future generations.

Our Sacred Heart education has taught us that our spirituality and faith are not limited to our one hour in church on Sunday and our liturgies at school. We live out our beliefs in our day-to-day actions. The decisions that we make are rooted in our spirituality; our deep faith and morals give us the strength to stand firm in our convictions as we make decisions that affect others. Guided by this personal and active faith in God, we are strong Christian representatives in today's world.

As the rigorous academics of the nineties are churning out well-oiled academic machines, and perfect SAT scores are no longer rare, success is too often equated with numbers and rank. As Sacred Heart students, we recognize and respect the importance of a good education, but our successes are not singularly limited to academic honors. A Sacred Heart graduate brings more to college campuses than stellar standardized test scores; we are a package deal. As a small

community, we *have* to do it all. There are no shrinking violets in a Sacred Heart garden. We are the scholars, the athletes, the leaders and the visionaries. We are the future.

As a network of twenty-one schools, we have built a national and worldwide community, seeking to educate with the same principles and values. It is these principles and values that set a Sacred Heart education apart from all others. Instead of being taught in an atmosphere of fierce competition, we are taught in an atmosphere of cooperation and collaboration. As students, we continue to flourish as risk-takers and independent thinkers who recognize not only the power of one, but the power of an entire community united.

Armed with the gifts of a deep faith and strong educational values, we have been given a responsibility to be proactive in this world; not to sit back and complain about what is wrong with the world, but to go out and make it better. This is best exemplified by our strong commitment to community service projects. We extend our talents and gifts to the outside world by tutoring students, assisting physically and mentally-challenged children and delivering food to homebound Senior Citizens through the Focus: Hope program. We provide active, living examples of our beliefs to the world around us.

During my fourteen years at Sacred Heart, I have experienced first-hand how Sacred Heart students stand out in the crowd and how they *do* make a difference in the world. Right from the start, during our preschool days, we are given choices. It is *our* choice whether to go to French class, gym class, or the playroom. It is *our* choice what books to read, classes to take, what service projects to commit to. We are always encouraged to take control of our personal growth and intellectual growth. We are given the freedom to choose. As a result, a Sacred Heart student develops courage and confidence. We are an active voice in the outside community. We have an opinion, and we take a stand. We want to take action against injustice and impropriety,

and we do. We want to make a difference, and we do. The key? The desire and ambition to take action comes from within us, but the courage, confidence and the positive belief that *we can do it* has been instilled in us by our strong Sacred Heart education.

At the time when Sacred Heart first opened its doors, many believed that young women were not prepared to withstand the rigors of a classroom, much less succeed. Grounded in the foundation of our goals, we, as members of the Sacred Heart community, as women of courage, confidence, strength and conviction, live as day-to-day proof that women can indeed succeed in the classroom – and in the boardroom, the courtroom, the laboratory, and the home. As graduates, we will carry the values that have been instilled in us into the outside world. We will continue to be that active voice that dares to care, works hard to effectuate change, and dedicates herself to making a difference.

Prize winner in the AASH Essay Contest; Ms. Keller presented this essay at the AASH National Conference in Washington, DC, April 1999.

Molded In A Unique Tradition

By Hilary Robinson, Stone Ridge, 1999

As my thirteen years as a student at Stone Ridge wind to a close, I enjoy the unbridled pursuit of learning for its own sake, which is manifested in the studies of my senior year. Stone Ridge has fostered my growth and development as a Catholic, as a woman, and as an intellectual. The education I have been privileged to receive here has prepared me to embrace my destiny, and I will do so to the fullest extent when I attend Harvard University in the fall of 1999. The culmination of my secondary school education coincides with the end of the twentieth century, and thus I reflect on what it means to graduate high school as a woman, a biracial woman no less, at the end of the century.

Stone Ridge has molded me in its unique tradition, a tradition that measures the basic worth and intelligence of all women and builds upon those assumptions to instill in its students a commitment to the Christian values embodied in its five Goals. From day one at Stone Ridge, I have been encouraged to voice my opinions, to value the views of others, and to take stock of my own convictions. Although I will always respect the opinions of others, I know that I will never assume another's ideas are better or more worthy than mine simply because they are male. Stone Ridge has taught me to be honest, diligent, and unrelenting in the pursuit of my goals and I will enter the university world and the wider career world afterward with the strong ability to assert myself. Although I will doubtlessly be bombarded by the cultural ideals of power, wealth, and status, I, a Stone Ridge graduate, will measure my self-worth by the standards of a personal and active faith in God, a deep respect for intellectual values, a social awareness which impels action, the building of community as a Christian value, and personal growth in an atmosphere of wise freedom.

Thus, it is not solely in the educational vein that Stone Ridge edifies its students. Hand-in-hand with academic excellence, we have been touched through our interactions with the needy in the Social Action Program; we have had our faith strengthened through Campus Ministry initiatives; and we have been united as a school through *congés* and Masses. I have very early memories from Lower School of donating *goûter* of milk and cookies to the homeless during Lent. This class sacrifice meant thirty empty stomachs at ten o'clock every day and a very real sense of what it meant to go without. With this realization came an appreciation of how fortunate we were and a desire to share that fortune with those who had none. Early on, through the awarding of coveted medals given at *Prîmes* every week in Lower School, I was taught to recognize and epitomize service, honesty, and diligence in others and myself. My nostalgia for those innocent days gone by is made complete by memories of the glorious feast days of all-school celebration. Feast Wishes taught me to appreciate my educators, the Feast Day of St. Madeleine Sophie Barat allowed me to learn of the sacrifices of our foundress, and the Feast Day of St. Rose Philippine Duchesne had a similar meaning. I was taught to admire these women for their charity, leadership, and pursuit of a dream, and, on one of those feast days, I, a child of seven years, told my school of six hundred that I would one day become President of the United States.

Mine has been an education complete with a Carol Gilligan for every Lawrence Kohlberg; an Ada Lovelace for every Blaise Pascal; and a Mary Cassatt for every Edgar Degas. Stone Ridge has taught me the “her” story behind the history and has thus instilled in me and in my classmates a passion to fulfill our lives’ objectives without hesitation. We know that there is no glass ceiling that cannot be shattered by the proficiency of a self-confident, intelligent woman. Therefore, the graduates of the Class of 1999 will enter the twenty-first century as

women ready to overturn the obstacles of sexism, racism, and classicism which we will undoubtedly encounter in our college and professional experiences. Stone Ridge has allowed us to develop our intellectual, artistic, and athletic talents, and, most importantly, Stone Ridge has taught us to value those gifts as crucial parts of ourselves. We will use our God-given abilities to better the communities and the world in which we live.

Sometimes I wonder if we, as a society, are in fact moving backward and not forward. Stone Ridge has instilled in me an appreciation of the ideals of democracy, equality, and justice – principles by which the Constitution of this country compels us all to abide. Sadly, the world around us knows few of these ideals and embodies even fewer. My Stone Ridge education has developed in me a woman who will not turn away from the harsh, sinful reality of the world's problems but rather will tackle them with the dignity and determination of her convictions. The members of the Class of 1999 will enter our communities as intelligent, dedicated women – women who do not necessarily possess a desire to gain money, power, and status, but rather who possess a keen desire to bring about change, to demand social justice, and to better the turn-of-the-century world in which we live.

The Fourth Vow

Madeleine Sophie Cooney, RSCJ, St. Joseph, Missouri & Barat College

Though there was great enjoyment in my studies, my travels, my extensive reading, my lectures, and my one-to-one contact with students, there was also often weariness, discouragement, frustration, and self-questioning about the value of it all. I now feel, from the perspective of eighty years and counting, that it was indeed enriching, both to myself and to others, and that for me, at least, these enterprises were the fruit of that Fourth Vow of Education which shone always like a beckoning star in my spiritual and intellectual firmament. The Vow of Education has, I believe, been the key to my ongoing formation as a Religious of the Sacred Heart

This is excerpted from the final issue of the RSCJ Journal of Reflection Sister Cooney edited, Winter/Spring, 1993.

A Lay Educator's Journey, 1969-1999

Janet Johnson Whitchurch, Menlo Park/Atherton

My introduction to Sacred Heart was as a large fenced piece of property my family drove by on our way to other places. This was in 1953 when I was ten years old and we had moved to Atherton. The convent was fifty-five years old. All that was visible were trees and a pink tower rising above them with a cross on top of it. When construction began on the Sigall building, closer to the road, I can remember my parents saying, "Well, they surely aren't skimping on that construction!" Later I can remember driving down Valparaiso and seeing girls standing outside the big wrought iron gates. They wore what I considered to be hideous uniforms; they were French Blue (appropriately enough) and made from a droopy synthetic fabric. The skirt was long (and modest) and there was a white blouse covered by a dismal bolero. These memories were all gathered indirectly in the 1950s. The only person I knew who went to the school did not talk much about her experiences there.

In 1969, having received bachelor's and master's degrees in art from Stanford University, I heard of a job available at Sacred Heart for an art teacher. For the first time, I went through the gates and onto the beautiful but intimidating grounds of the 1898 Convent. I felt small and inconsequential as I walked under the *porte cochère* up to the imposing doorway. Inside, the building was cool and cavernous with a minimal amount of furniture, the type that kept you sitting straight, on the edge of your chair. What was it going to be like to teach in this austere and formal place? I wasn't a Roman Catholic; would I still get the job? Thus it was that I began my relationship with Sacred Heart.

I was the first full-time art teacher the school had ever had. Art in various guises,

of course, had always been a part of the curriculum; usually one or more of the RSCJ had taught it. In 1969, though, there was not a nun available, and they had decided to expand the offerings. Many things at the Convent seemed to be in transition. Vatican II had changed the way subjects were taught, the way the nuns looked, and the way the school was funded. Many people were nostalgic for the old ways. For the Sisters too, things were changing. When I arrived, there were no religious wearing the bonnet and veil that fit close around their face. In fact, a number wore no habit at all. By the time I arrived, the nuns occupied less of the Main Building than previously; with the rule of cloister lessened, their domain had shrunk.

New demands were placed on the religious who led Sacred Heart Schools in the late sixties and early seventies, not the least of which was working with the lay faculty who were increasing in numbers. Rather than being run by the Province, the schools had to select and build separate Boards of Trustees. Fundraising became more of an issue with the need to pay higher salaries to lay-teachers. In 1973, when I became pregnant with my second child, the school had no medical insurance for pre-natal care, nor did they have maternity leave. I remember my mother was convinced that I would be asked to leave my job. Instead, adaptations were made to give me a month off for maternity leave, and, to the credit of the board of trustees' and the vision of the RSCJ, changes were made to accommodate this new situation.

Lay persons on the faculty were sometimes frustrated by the “inequities” we saw in a system that was designed not for us but for the nuns who had been running the school for years. The system was in transition, and while it seemed like it was changing too slowly, looking back now some thirty years later, I think the RSCJ were adapting and

changing as quickly as they could. In fact, I now marvel at how flexible they were. The school's identity was changing in part due to Vatican II but also in part due to the changes in demographics in the area and the decision of several nuns to leave the order.

The students were caught up in these changes too. Many of them who had been at the school for more than eight years remembered all of the old formalities and rituals. The students, and recent alums, however, did not seem to miss the 'old days' as much as their parents and some of the older teachers and nuns. The students' memories were of having to pass from class to class in silence, lining up in white dresses and veils for feast days, and most of all of the dreaded 'clacker'. While I never saw the clacker being used, I was treated by students to numerous demonstrations of the rising and genuflecting that was regulated by the clacker at the beginnings and endings of classes. Some of the rituals were looked back on with nostalgia, but some were loathed and the students were only too glad to welcome change. In a cupboard in the faculty room I came some of the old *prime* cards: *très bien*, *assez bien* and *bien*. The students and the nuns told us of the terror *Prîmes* often struck in the hearts of the students; the worst thing that could happen was to get no card at all.

While a number of students remembered the "old days," even more of their parents did, especially if they were alumnae of the school or had had older daughters go through the school. I can remember Open Houses and Back-to-School Nights where parents registered their distress at the changes. Usually this distress was couched in pleas to the RSCJ to regain "control" of the school; innovation, and it most often seemed that this was equated with 'lay faculty', was not what they were paying for. I remember one father whose wife was an alumna of the school and who had three daughters in the high

school. He spoke out at one of the parent meetings and asked the other parents to be patient and to trust in the wisdom of the Religious of the Sacred Heart who had run the school well and with vision for seventy years and seemed more than capable of making the best decisions for the future.

Students were affected by the conflicts and indecision ushered in at this time, but they were also affected by what was going on outside of the school. The period of the late sixties and early seventies was a period of great change for our whole society. No wonder some of the parents wanted the school to remain as it always had been. No wonder some of the idealistic young lay faculty were excited about some of the changes that were being made to the school. No wonder the RSCJ struggled with the new identity of the school which was evolving. And no wonder the students were testing and pushing the limits of the new rules that were made and the new ways in which the curriculum was taught. Being in the Bay Area, close to Stanford University and U.C. Berkeley, to say nothing of Haight-Ashbury, increased the sense of being a part of some kind of revolution.

A challenge throughout the seventies was to wisely use some of the freedoms extended to all Catholics to make their faith more relevant and to integrate that into the religion program which people expected at a Sacred Heart school. I remember the discussions we used to have at lunch about the balance between freedom and tradition as it related to liturgy. We were still having a First Friday Mass and frequent liturgies for holidays and feast days, so our discussions often were enriched by the priests who stayed after Mass to join us for lunch. We also tried to establish a balance between the traditional sense of decorum and discipline that had existed at Sacred Heart and the new

iconoclastic ideas that were sweeping many educational institutions at that time. I remember the indignation of some girls who were punished for sitting on the grass in front of the main building with their uniform skirts pulled up over their knees so that they could get a tan. There were endless discussions about how short was too short for the uniform in this age of the mini-skirt. Instead of the old French Blue uniforms, the uniforms of the seventies were pink or yellow dresses, and none of them was worn below the knee. Issues around the changing uniform were sometimes the most contentious, but by no means the most serious, controversies at the School.

It is no surprise that the RSCJ from all over the country were joining together to write the Goals and Criteria. The issues found in Goals One, Three and Five were very relevant to the times. Society as well as the Catholic Church and the Religious of the Sacred Heart were all trying to figure out what embodied an “Active Faith in God”, “A Social Awareness that Impels to Action” and what it meant to foster “Personal Growth in an Atmosphere of Wise Freedom.”

Throughout the seventies, the curriculum at the School expanded and encompassed new areas. More science classes were added and their enrollment increased; more girls took advanced math and began to think of their education as a springboard to a career. My art classes got so big I moved from my small classroom on the third floor, and many other teachers with similar problems of growing too large for their space followed with their classes. New labs were built in the Morey Building as the elementary classes in this building were moved to St. Joseph's across campus. Eventually most of the third floor was devoted to housing for the nuns. An Art Gallery was created on the ground floor of the school by a family who had an extensive contemporary art collection. As a

teacher I had the extra bonus of exposing my students to the very latest in modern art, and right in their own . While many of the girls no doubt took these works of art for granted, I think that subsequently when they saw them in museums, they may have realized how lucky they were to be able to enjoy them on a daily basis. I had come to the school as the first full time art teacher and had managed to expand the program to include art history and, to a limited degree, curatorship of the Art Gallery. While schools of the Sacred Heart have traditionally been supportive of the arts and very much aware of the importance of aesthetic influences on their students, it was Sacred Heart, Menlo which first supported and developed such an enviable program.

Every year as we had our opening assembly, someone spoke about the vision and goals of St. Madeleine Sophie. When I thought of the women's movement that was so much a part of the social changes taking place, I was impressed by how ahead of her time St. Madeleine Sophie was. In the mid-1970s, the world around us was trying to change attitudes about what was pedagogically appropriate for girls. Of course, Sacred Heart Schools had been thinking about this for a long time, with varying degrees of success. In some ways we were still trying to figure out how to educate girls so that they could take on leadership roles in society. It was almost as if the rest of society had caught up with St. Madeleine Sophie's vision. Because of my interest in history, both art and political history, I was especially moved by her idea of starting a school during the political turmoil that followed the French Revolution. Even a hundred years later, in 1900, most women did not go to school. Even today, with college a matter of course for most women, it still seemed as if we had a long way to go both at this school and in our contemporary world before we met the goals established by the foundress of the

Religieuse du Sacre Coeur.

I was therefore stunned in 1984 when the board of trustees at Menlo, in a break with Sacred Heart tradition as I knew it, decided to close the boarding school and become coed. How could we apply the vision of St. Madeleine Sophie to boys? When I came to the school in 1969, I was one of the advocates of change. Showing my frustration with those who were mired in the school's past, I pushed hard with other new, young lay teachers for a more progressive curriculum, a faculty pay scale, greater freedom for the students. Throughout the changing seventies, I had been an agent of change, whether it was expressed in private moments of rebellion or in confrontations about curricular goals or pedagogical techniques. I felt that in some ways the school needed to be dragged into the twentieth century, but in other ways it had gotten there long before the rest of society and St. Madeleine Sophie's mission to educate young women was one of these ways. I felt we were betraying one of the main tenets of her vision; and the question remained: could we even educate boys in the way that we had been educating the girls? Most astonishing to me was the fact that many of the advocates for this change had been the ones who had resisted other changes along the way, changes that I found inconsequential when compared to this one. For me this amounted to a crisis of faith.

The change would mean not only the introduction of boys but also the closing of the boarding school. While the boarding school had faltered during the seventies, because of the general turbulence of the times, it had made a recovery and was rebuilding its program. The dorm added a perspective to the school student body that was not found in the students who came during the day. The worldwide network of schools was visible in the dorm. We had students from around the world who knew of Sacred Heart by

reputation or who came on exchange from their local Sacred Heart schools. Many of the Latin American families who sent their daughters to the school had been doing so for generations. After the fall of the Shah of Iran, a number of Persian girls had come to the school. Sacred Heart schools in Europe had long been known as a place for the daughters of diplomats to get an education, no matter what their religious belief, and Sacred Heart, Menlo also served this purpose. And what of our active exchange with students from other Sacred Heart schools in the U.S.? Would it survive the loss of the boarding school? The other loss in the closing of the boarding school was the twenty-four hour presence of students on campus. It was depressing to come onto campus during the weekends and the evenings after the dorm was closed; there was no noise, no lights and no activity coming from the main building. When the building was closed after the 1989 earthquake, its cold silence was even more depressing.

In 1984, the year the school accepted the first male students, I left, partly due to my unhappiness about the changes at the school and partly because I needed a break. With three children, a full time job had become exhausting and intruded into family life. Within three months, though, Sacred Heart had its strongest influence on me. During Advent that year I missed the services leading up to Christmas so much that I began to attend the Catholic church that was in my neighborhood. Fifteen years of living and discussing the relevance of life to the Church and vice-versa had turned me into a Catholic, much to my amazement. At first it seemed just a nostalgia for the liturgies, but then the more I reflected on my feelings, I realized that what I really was longing for was a faith-based life; Goal One had taken root! I remember how my Protestant mother had always criticized the Jesuit edict of “Give me your child at six and I will give you a

Catholic for life.” All I could think of is that St. Madeleine Sophie had succeeded beyond her wildest dreams in wanting to create a Jesuit-like school; her “Jesuit” school had this same proselytizing effect on those associated with it. It had even worked on an adult! By Lent I had found a sponsor, the director of studies at Sacred Heart, who when she found out I was converting said that she had always wanted to be a Godmother. I was confirmed during Advent of that year, a year after experiencing the gap left in my life that came with my departure from the school. I am grateful that I had a crisis of faith of a secular sort that led to an understanding of faith in a religious sense. I am convinced that had I never left Sacred Heart, I would never have experienced the spiritual void that I did.

By 1987, I was back at the school as a teaching assistant for the world history teacher who had more students than she could handle and needed me to help grade tests and papers. Then in 1989, I was called because, after one semester, the freshman history teacher had to be let go. Since I had helped develop the course, I was a logical replacement. So, in January of 1989, after fifteen years of teaching girls, I walked into my first coed class. The biggest problem I had in teaching these classes, the first classes I had ever taught with boys, was that I found male adolescent humor hilarious. And the boys did not take long to figure this out. I had always enjoyed boys and had two sons of my own; I just didn't think that boys belonged at a Sacred Heart school. How wrong I was.

Back when the decision was made to go coed, and members of the faculty debated the decision, one of the teachers kept saying how relevant Madeleine Sophie's vision was for boys. Not so much that they needed to be educated to take positions of leadership, they already were being educated for that. No, it was more the quality of leadership that

needed to be addressed. What could be better for boys than an education rooted in the humanities, an education that valued the whole child. In particular, this would be a school where boys learned about women. I can remember thinking, 'Sure, that'll last about one year before parents start complaining about their sons getting in touch with their "feminine side." Would the English department still offer women's works; could boys read Jane Austen and Virginia Woolf? The idea was that we would bring a girls' school to boys intact and unchanged, except for the bathrooms. After teaching the freshman history class for a semester, my earlier skepticism about this being possible vanished. Much of what I had felt was best about Sacred Heart as a girls' school remained. A great deal of credit for this rested on the excellent faculty that stayed at the school through the change. Their willingness to adapt and find flexible solutions to problems, but also not give up on the important things, resulted in a school that did not lose its identity.

Another crucial aspect of the school's survival was the Goals and Criteria. While Sacred Heart, Menlo (now Atherton) made some very big changes in the mid-eighties, they were not able to throw the baby out with the bath water because the Network's Goals and Criteria made certain that the school remained a Sacred Heart school. I can remember the general eye rolling and attendant body language indicating exasperation that accompanied the early days of Goals and Criteria, but this framework allowed the school to change and grow within a strong context. It was only after I worked at other schools in the late eighties and early nineties that I saw how crucial the Goals and Criteria were to giving the school a focus.

After the earthquake of 1989, the Main Building was shut. Its stability in an earthquake had always been a concern and, while there was little visible damage, it was

felt that it would be too dangerous to allow people into the building. So this beautiful, old building, my first tangible connection to Sacred Heart, stood hollow and empty for the beginning of the nineties. Dismantling the building and removing all of the bricks was estimated at almost the cost of a new building, while remodeling it was even more expensive. There was an intense debate by the board of trustees about the wisdom of using money that might be better used for education for the “luxury” of remodeling the building. There was also the legitimate concern of whether or not the building was structurally sound. I, along with a number of other teachers, RSCJ, and alums felt the emotional and spiritual cost to the school of losing the building would be greater than any financial loss. Luckily, two devoted alums spearheaded the decision to retain the structure. Their efforts were seconded by a decision made by the board to start a fund-raising campaign for the renovation. I cannot describe the joy we felt when parts of the refurbished building were opened for the one hundredth anniversary of the school in 1998. The Mass we held alongside the building was a moment of triumph and gratitude. The emotional comfort of being able to return to the building has impacted not only those of us who knew it in the “old days”, but also the students who were not even born when the boarding school was closed in 1984. The building has soul and once again provides a center for our campus. The memories that permeate its rooms are available once again.

One of the comments that is often made by people visiting the Sacred Heart campus is that the relationships between students and faculty seem so warm and natural; there is a rapport that is remarkable and perhaps unique. For years, teachers have followed the adage to “educate the whole child.” This is emphasized no matter what subject is taught. It is because of this that teachers are acutely aware of their students as

individuals. They really look for those qualities that make each student special and respect whatever those qualities are. Largely because of this, students do not see teachers as “other”; they do not see their relationships with teachers as adversarial. Teachers say that they are there for the students, and they really act that way. This has always been one of the things that I have appreciated about working at Sacred Heart. That and the really palpable joy that the faculty feels in being intellectually engaged. Educating lifelong learners is another aspect of teaching here, and the faculty are great examples of lifelong learning. They are passionate in their interests and share their passions with their students. While I have always extolled the virtues of a Sacred Heart education, it had always been in theory until my daughter spent her senior year at Sacred Heart Preparatory.

When the younger of my two sons was in high school, the director urged me to enroll him at Sacred Heart now that it was coed, but he did not wish to come. Seven years later my daughter, his younger sister, seemed to be settled in the local public high school. I had resigned myself to never having a child attend Sacred Heart. Then, after her junior year, my daughter suddenly decided in the wake of some disappointments in both her academic and social life to come to Sacred Heart for her senior year. Her academic performance at her public high school had been uninspired; she was never really engaged intellectually. In addition, while she had many friends, she had felt unsupported as an individual in a large, competitive school. Her decision to come to Sacred Heart proved to be the perfect antidote. Within a few weeks of starting, she began to enumerate all of the things that she found so wonderful about the school. First, she appreciated going to a school that provided a spiritual basis for its students. Next, she appreciated the way the

small classes were taught; she felt very supported by her teachers and as a result of this, became more engaged. She also felt very comfortable with the strong sense of community on campus and with the way students from diverse backgrounds seemed to feel comfortable with each other. Finally, while she chafed at some of the rules, she felt reassured by the degree to which the principal, administrators, and teachers genuinely cared about the students, enough to make sure that rules were fair and enforced. Does this sound like an endorsement of the Goals and Criteria? After years of extolling the virtues of a Sacred Heart education, I was confronted with some very personal proof of how that education manifests itself. Suddenly this was not a pedagogical idea; it was not something I saw happening to a student in my class, someone else's child; it was happening to my own child! This should not have surprised me, but it did. My daughter came alive academically at the school and felt wonderful about all of the support she received from her teachers. The values that had enchanted me from the very first time I started to teach at Sacred Heart 35 years ago were still there, and I was lucky enough to have a daughter who benefited from them.

The remote image I had of the school forty-five years ago when we would pass it on the road has evolved into a relationship that encompasses my life. I met my second husband at the school, I discovered my faith at the school, and our daughter learned some of the most valuable lesson of her life there. Throughout it all, the school has provided me with a lifelong, ongoing education. I know that I have been educating students, but I feel that my experience at the school has also educated me. I have learned so much about myself at the school. I have learned much more about my subject as a result of teaching it to students, and I have been introduced to so many new subjects by colleagues at the

school. Our lunch time discussions of movies, books, and politics have kept me intellectually engaged and humbled. Most of all, it has been a joy to be a part of a community that celebrates the life of Christ, the Heart of Jesus, in so many varied and wonderful ways.

A Gift of the Holy Spirit
Jana Kiely

I shall never forget my first encounter with the Religious of the Sacred Heart. It was 1964. I was working on my Ph.D. thesis in biology at Harvard University. I was married and had a small baby. I wanted to find a job where I could share fully the gift of my education and yet devote myself wholeheartedly to being a wife and mother. I knew this concept was unacceptable to the large, mostly male universities, but I thought it should have been easily understandable to the faculties and administrations of women's colleges. So I wrote to ten of these in the Boston area. I received only two replies. One was an irate letter telling me, in effect, that I could not be a serious biologist and be asking for a part-time job. Newton College of the Sacred Heart's was a polite rejection informing me that their biology department had no openings. A few weeks later, I got a phone call from Mother Frances Cunningham, chairperson of the biology department at Newton, a cell biologist in her own right. She wondered whether I could show the electron microscope I was working with to her students. I was glad to do it

Two weeks later, Mother Quinlan, dean of faculty, asked me to come for an interview as two of their biology professors were considering going back for further studies. I met with the president, Mother Husson, and Mother Quinlan. They shared with me that they were making a novena to discern what to do about the biology department. They felt they should warn me a bit about the chairperson of biology before introducing me to her. She was sure to tell me all of this was the workings of the Holy Spirit, and, as a scientist, I might not be used to such language in the work place. Well, they were right; Mother Cunningham did tell me about the Holy Spirit at our first encounter. But it was clear to me from the start, and as years went by it became clearer and clearer, that my encounter with the Religious of the Sacred Heart was indeed an extraordinary gift of the Holy Spirit. I did understand Mother Cunningham's language, and I was delighted I could use it while working in the sciences which I also loved.

Mother Cunningham's clear understanding of Thomas Aquinas' priorities helped me above all in what I wanted to do: balance my family and my career. When she saw me nervous about staying late for an extra meeting, she would say, "Now, my dear Jana, we all have to keep our priorities straight; mine are prayer first, teaching second. Yours are family first, teaching second. Go home."

This never meant our teaching was second rate. With Dr. Mary Albert, Mother Frances Cunningham, myself, and three other part-time Harvard Ph.D.s, Newton had a very strong biology department. But none of us was asked to sacrifice personal and family life to our careers.

My teaching at Newton was only the beginning of what became one of the closest and most supportive friendships of my life. In the years since, I have never undertaken anything without asking for Mother Cunningham's prayers as well as those of the Sacred Heart Community. I do not know how or when exactly I became totally dependent on these prayers, but I know that, through them, people whom I saw at death's door are still alive and living happy lives. Among them are my neighbor, friend and colleague, Dr. Mary Day Albert; my youngest child, Maria; my mother; and my cousin Maite. I know that through her faith and love Mother Cunningham brought people back into the Church and through her prayers accompanied them to paradise.

I could never fully express my gratitude for the support, the strength, the consolation, and the spiritual leadership which I and my family have received all these years. It is like a fountain filling us with love and, as I believe and hope, "springing up to eternal life."

The only thing I could hope is to be able to give to others what Mother Cunningham and the community of the Sacred Heart have given to me: the love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Jana Kiely was a lecturer in biology, 1965-1975; this is reprinted from a Newton College Book of Tributes to the Religious of the Sacred Heart.

Giving To A Special School

Pauline Egan

In 1979, we chose Stuart Country Day School [Princeton, New Jersey] for five-year-old Kate, in part because *I* felt comfortable here! Those early threads of welcome and reassurance have grown into a tightly-woven, multi-patterned tapestry of friendships and laughter, of challenges and commitments, of tears and triumphs, until finally it is no longer easy to distinguish where Stuart begins and ends in our lives.

People often speak about the unique quality of Stuart that sets it apart from other schools. As one of the Network of Sacred Heart schools, Stuart has five Goals, and these with their accompanying Criteria provide a solid foundation for the education of the whole child. These Goals incorporate a set of Christian values by which members of the Stuart community strive to live each day. Every fifth year, members of an in-house steering committee evaluate, through questions and conversations, the school's success in living the Goals. Long-range plans are formulated in light of the Criteria; and the board of trustees is bound to carry out its responsibilities according to these same standards. What results is a sharing of ideas, concerns and aspirations which gives the school an inner strength.

During the school year, Stuart's teachers, well-versed in and comfortable with the Goals and Criteria, impart a curriculum which provides intellectual stimulation and challenges at all levels. Inherent in their teaching is the development of individual self-confidence, leadership skills and mutual respect which leads to an awareness of social and environmental issues. Very quickly, Stuart girls develop a sensitivity to the needs of their worlds – both within the confines of their classroom, where consideration for others and a sharing of knowledge begin to take place during the first few weeks of kindergarten – and beyond the Mater window to the greater world

of endangered creatures and hungry children whose plights strike a resounding chord within the developing consciences of lower schoolers. It begins with supplies for Martin House and hundreds of peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for Loaves and Fishes soup kitchen, until eventually a house is repaired in Trenton or Appalachia by upper schoolers. Teachers, staff, parents and students work together in the summer outreach programs. Financial aid contributes to the diversification of the student body. Faculty development enables teachers to continue their education and share new knowledge in their classrooms. Parents and alumnae donate their time and resources in many ways. The ripples of giving radiate outward in ever-widening circles, touching each one of us again and again and inspiring us, as we receive, to give back, to give anew.

For our family, the giving on our part has never seemed extraordinary or remarkable. By volunteering time as well as contributing to annual giving and the capital campaigns and by serving on the board of trustees, my husband, Bill, and I have tried to do what seemed commensurate with our abilities. What we have been given, however, is beyond quantification.

My gifts from Stuart are intertwined with my role as mother. Stuart has reinforced my efforts, corroborated my beliefs, diminished my anxieties and earned my trust. There has always been someone at Stuart who has understood, whose efforts have coalesced with our own, who has often known better than I that “this, too, shall pass!” I have come to understand and appreciate the Goals and Criteria, to realize that it is they, and the people working at Stuart who believe in them, that are responsible for Stuart’s being, even in the eye of the casual beholder, a very special place.

Pauline Egan is currently chairman of the board of trustees at Stuart Country Day School.

The Significance of My Sacred Heart Education

Cokie Boggs Roberts, New Orleans, Stone Ridge, 1960

I cannot imagine doing my job as a network journalist without having had a Sacred Heart education. The fact is that the nuns took us completely seriously as women, and this was in the 1950s, when not many people were taking women seriously. It gave such a sense of confidence that we could be anything we wanted to be. But also they gave us such a strong, firm intellectual basis for our lives that we were able to know a lot and go on to the wonderful ability to keep learning. And it was always intellectually fun, so that the spirit of give and take that we have on the set of our television broadcast is something I learned first in Sacred Heart schools that I went to, both in New Orleans and Washington, DC. And of course, finally and most importantly, the very firm moral base, the sense of values, the sense of commitment to community that has been so important in my family's life are things I learned both at home and very strongly in Sacred Heart schools.

Adapted with permission from a 1997 video on The Network of Sacred Heart Schools.

The Thoughts of His Heart

Ann Fulton Coté, Newton Country Day, 1949, Newton College, 1953

“The thoughts of his heart are to all generations, to deliver their souls from death and preserve them in spite of famine.” Every First Friday we heard this opening sentence from the Introit for the Feast of the Sacred Heart, albeit, for most of us, it started with the Latin *Cogitationes*. I do not know why, but recently these words started going through my mind again, and upon reflection, I realized that they encapsulated the devotion to the Sacred Heart and the particular role the Religious of the Sacred Heart have played in living that devotion.

In his book about the great theologian Karl Rahner, SJ, Harvey Egan, SJ, writes, “Yet again in the Church’s life there flames up a mystical longing for an ultimate unity in which all the different forms of Christian living and all complexities are done away with and resolved in a dark mysterious mysticism in which there are no ‘ways.’ To Rahner, devotion to Jesus’ Sacred Heart speaks to this longing because this heart is the reality by which God’s ineffable mystery gives itself – and fills – our human mystery.”

For me it was the particular words “*thoughts of his heart*” which expressed a new meaning of the devotion. The integration of thinking and loving *is* the ultimate unity of which Harvey Egan speaks. The dichotomy so often operable between our convictions and our affections is swept away in the Sacred Heart.

Upon further reflection, I realized that through many years I had tried to define what the Religious of the Sacred Heart truly meant to me. I have found the definition! Have they not always striven to unite thinking and loving? Did they not always push (and occasionally cajole) us to stretch our minds and, at the same time, express love in action? Is this not what they taught, and, of greater consequence, is it not what we saw them live in the day-to-day journey toward the unity of mind and heart?

In the fall of 1998, I had the privilege of visiting St. Madeleine Sophie Barat’s birthplace

in Joigny, France. Amazingly, it was the Feast of Mater when my sister and I knocked on the door. We were in time for Mass – the *perfect* opportunity to thank God for the Society and for every religious. Let us remember St. Madeleine Sophie’s exhortation to courage and confidence as we celebrate the 200th birthday. Courage in the face of an *unknown future* for the Society and for each of us, confidence that the Sacred Heart “delivers their souls from death and preserves them in spite of famine.”

Afterglow

(To honor, in a modest way, Sister Madeleine Sophie Cooney)

When first we met, her reign was in Humanities,
a fourth-floor room alive with paintings
rich in detail and artistic dreams –
alive with words, with lines
of intimate and philosophic memories
concerning those who set such special thoughts
in modes that charmed.

Thus we were caught,
like student butterflies
within the silvered nets of knowledge
flung in friendly capes around us
by a chatelaine of intellect:
Professor / Sister / Doctor / friend: Sophie.

Her travels formed a tapestry –
a geographic tapestry with colors of the world:
Patmos, Israel, Ireland, too;
England, France, Japan, and Crete,
and Scotland on the side.
Mythic scenes, religious shrines –
all and more were skeins of place
she wove into a work of art
presented in a vibrant show.
How fortunate we were!
Each place had touched her spirit
as she observed, absorbed the history
and culture of those other worlds.
She lived the past.

In class with her, we walked in retrospect
on mystic foreign shores. How easily we trudged
our way along old Dublin streets with Joyce,
who served us as a half-iconoclastic guide.
With Dante, we revolved around his rose
and thrilled to love of Beatrice.
For weeks, odd Proust, Remembrances, and France
were daily fare. Then quietly
we left in thought for Innisfree and Yeats.

We hung upon our mentor's words;
we learned to dream in lovely ways.
Sophie plunged us deep
into the swirls of spiralled beauty
found in grandeur of the written word.
We focused on our centeredness
with all humanity
and reveled in our academic oversoul.

Yes, we know that Sophie's life has been a gem
both radiant and rare. To say she has enriched
our lives is not enough. To praise her
leaves too much unsaid. We proclaim
that she embodies what is left of good
in this far-too-fickle world
that seems unsure of dreams, ideals, or joy.

Our choice of Sophie's pilgrimage
commits our hopes, commits our future growth
to wisdom of the soul
that flies with smiling sureness to eternity.

Dee Konrad
Associate professor, Barat Collge

Louise Soniat, RSCJ

Kathleen Gibbons Favrot, The Rosary, New Orleans, 1953 & Maryville

What was she like – this lady we called *Ma Mere* – Mother Louise Soniat?

Physically she was very short and very round, but her smile was beautiful period. In a day when there was little physical contact between the nuns and the students, she expressed her great affection for us with wonderful warm hugs and kisses. “Stoop down so I can kiss you” was an often-heard expression of hers. I can still see her in the classroom – always with her arms crossed in the front of her and a twinkle in her eye.

Mother Soniat loved to read and kept up with all of the latest books, including some that were considered scandalous in their day. In fact, she and then Reverend Mother Odile Lapeyre had a serious disagreement over her recommendation that her students read *Barrabas*. And we read *Barrabas*. She was the first person I ever knew who read *Catcher in the Rye*, and she told me that I could not be considered an educated person until I read it. As a teacher of English, French, Latin, and math, Mother Soniat had no equal. She made you want to learn because she made learning interesting and fun. We even played card games in French class – games she invented to keep us interested in learning French. No one ever misbehaved in her classes. Children and young people responded to her because she had a genuine love for them and understood them. I am convinced that this was because of the child in her that kept the spirit of fun alive in her until the day she died. Her incredible sense of humor, I think, made her especially fond of the more “spirited” students.

Then, of course, there was Mother Soniat’s candy. Those wonderful treats – delicious fudge, caramel candy, peanut brittle, and the famous whiskey balls – were made by Mother Soniat and many willing helpers. There in the convent kitchen we would help her make, wrap, and pack the candy, which was sold at the Mission Festival and at Christmas time. Those were

the most fun times of all – teacher and students having a wonderful time together, not as teacher and students but as great, good friends.

She told us once about the Cajun gardener at Grand Coteau who refused to bring her luggage down from the attic because he did not want her to go. She was the only one who could speak French to him. And that is how all of us who knew her felt about her – we did not want her to go. But, of course, she had to go finally, and eventually she went for all eternity. I, for one, take great comfort in the fact that when I go, Mother Soniat will be there waiting and ready to greet me with a smile, a hug, a kiss, and maybe a caramel candy.

For the Eye Complete

(In Memory of Marie Odeide Mouton, RSCJ)

As heaven does, she wanted the long view

(rehearsal for the whole view)

saw wide, took sky limitless – high above

like bold cliff-clinging ancient yew;

wind-shaped, wind-taught to move

and not be moved; to hold patient at root.

Blue, clean clear, rinsed, all far

far-seeing space. No star

obstructed. No small light overlooked.

Katherine Haddox Privett, Maryville 1946

Claire Basar's Little Blue Notebook

By Sharon Karam, RSCJ, Grand Coteau 1962, Maryville 1969

I will never forget the moment: standing at the back of the Barat College chapel in 1995, ready to walk in the entrance procession for a memorial Mass for Sr. Claire Basar. Sr. Theresa McElligott turned to hand me something she wanted me to take to the National Archives of the Society of the Sacred Heart in St. Louis. It was a small plastic three-hole notebook, the very smallest binder of its type. It was a notebook which Claire often had open in her lap during prayer, and it contained the names of her students from the beginning of her teaching life up to her adult groups on Barat's campus. I took it from Theresa's hands and knew that the words I had prepared for the welcome to her memorial were limp and useless compared to the reality represented in this object. So I spoke instead about the power of the little blue notebook, which suddenly took on the reality of a sacred object.

Exactly what I said that evening I cannot retrieve, but I have since used the image of it often, and its power grows stronger and clearer with each rendition. It represents for me a kind of fidelity between student and teacher that has marked Sacred Heart education for almost 200 years now. It stands for the integration of contemplative life and apostolic work that marked St. Madeleine Sophie's educational dream. It shouts out of its now ink-smeared margins Claire's journey over many years, across many miles, and into an amazing diversity of subjects.

Some examples will illustrate the power of this little book, now tucked neatly into the Archives. At Menlo, 1939-41, Claire taught 6th arithmetic, sup(Supplementary? Superior?) French, 3rd Academic Latin, 1st Academic Latin, Junior Arts, and 1st Cours Sewing. The range of teaching ability is itself impressive, but what impresses me more is the list of names; surely some of these youngsters might have had Claire only one period a week, but their names, along with whole class lists, are written clearly in her book of life. On the other end of her life's activity are the lists of college students, mostly adults, in courses like Masterpieces in Decorative Arts: Art Nouveau, Art Deco, Spring Semester 1990, Barat College.

If the book were lost, it would live still in my memory, as in Theresa McElligott's; it *is* another kind of sacred object; it is a reminder of the community of educators and students across two hundred years of living tradition; it is a story waiting for fuller telling by someone who knew Clare through this journey of years.

My Friend Lucy Lamy, RSCJ

Polly Holden, Duchesne, Houston

From the very beginning of our friendship, Lucy Lamy's devotion to God, to the Religious of the Sacred Heart, and to every child who ever attended a Sacred Heart school was apparent. She spoke frequently about the fact that in her youth she had not wanted to become a nun; she simply knew that becoming a nun was God's plan for her and that she had to do God's will. At her funeral we learned from Father Joe Doyle, SJ, that sometimes she found the novitiate almost unbearable. One night she was working alone in the kitchen, a true penance for someone who abhorred any form of domestic labor. In frustration she threw herself upon her knees and said, "Lord, I cannot do this. I have to leave this place." While Lucy was in the depths of despair, a voice said to her, "Yes, you can stay, and I will be with you every step of the way, and when it is time for you to go, I will come and get you."

Sister Lamy's primary message to me was to love God and to turn my life over to Him for direction. In our day-to-day conversations, her advice was "Give it to the Lord. He will let you know when to act and when to speak – if you listen."

One day Sr. Lamy told me she enjoyed our visits so much because, regardless of the subject, our discussion always seemed to turn to the spiritual. She could feel my desire to hear more of her wisdom and to be closer to God. Gently she taught me by referring me to an article or book on which I was to meditate. We shared the fruits of the meditation as I learned to "Be still and know that God is." Soon we shared those thoughts and emotions nearest our hearts. She was the mother, the nurturer of my spiritual growth while at the same time truly enjoying books I discovered.

Though a member of a cloistered community until Vatican II, Sr. Lucy Lamy was very much aware of the outside world. After cloister, she welcomed the challenges as well as the freedom of working more closely and personally with those around her. While she successfully blended her two worlds, it was only because she trusted God's guidance in choosing the areas in which she dedicated her time and work.

Sr. Lucy Lamy was a great teacher to both child and adult because she approached the whole person. To many who met her, she was truly an inspiration, although she was much too humble to believe this of herself. Her life was built around prayer and her steadfast belief and trust in God.

In her last decade or so, as her physical world at Duchesne Academy in Houston became restricted because of illness, her thoughts on life became more concise. It was as if she was summarizing the meaning of her existence. "I do believe in God; help my unbelief" (Mark 9:24) was one of her favorite passages. Her mind was still focused on carrying out the will of God. Her every thought was a prayer for all of us. For the first time in my life, through her example, I saw the true meaning of offering my personal pain for someone else. I also realized the true meaning of the sacrifice God made for us in sending His Son to die for us.

Shortly before her death in 1997, she told me, "It's all about relationships and what we make of them." On reflection, this quote seems to summarize the meaning of life. My life is much richer for having known and loved Sr. Lucy Lamy. How blessed I am to call her my friend.

As those who loved her gathered at her deathbed and while the nuns sang a hymn, Lucy's eyes opened. It became apparent her attention was focused on something we

could not see. Her eyes followed a spot, focusing on the left of the room and then the right. Finally her eyes rested in front of her. She closed her eyes and went with her Lord. He had come for her, just as He promised.

To Helen Carroll, RSCJ, from a Grateful Alumnus

Helen Carroll, RSCJ, the first principal of Stuart Hall for Boys, was often referred to as "the foundress of Stuart Hall," a title she actively discouraged. Though it was she who launched the new school, she refused to see herself as anything more important than a member of the team of educators who were making Sacred Heart education available to boys. Sister Carroll headed the school for fourteen years, until 1970. She remained active in the life of the school as long as her health permitted.

Generations of Stuart Hall boys adored Sister Carroll. Even those who knew her only through stories, pictures, and occasional visits seemed to understand what she meant to Stuart Hall and to feel her great love. She was a profound influence in their lives. One alumnus wrote, "When she was with her boys, Sister Carroll was radiant. They were her sons, and she loved them as only a mother could. "

One of the finest tributes to Sister Carroll's legacy of love came in a letter she received shortly before her death:

Dear Mother Carroll:

...Long ago, I could not have expressed it for I was merely twelve, but may I tell you this... My life began in Stuart Hall. You and the teachers and staff helped me recover dignity and a sense of self that had been lost at my previous school. There I struggled as the Spanish kid who could barely read English, sitting in the most remote seat in the room due to alphabetical seating.... On top of that, unbeknownst to me, I needed glasses, which added to the alienation and disorientation. I did miserably and felt awful about it on a daily basis. It literally seemed like I had fallen behind and could never catch up, and I was treated like a bad and lazy child. I felt hopeless and lost, often wishing to die.

Your presence and treatment, the care and attention I received at Stuart Hall lifted me up from a sad and dark place. I tell you this so you can understand that I mean literally "my life began at Stuart Hall."

I honestly suspect I may have eventually become a high school drop-out, out of desperation and lack of preparation, had my mom not taken me to Stuart Hall in my seventh grade year.

You deserve to know the huge difference you made in my life, and I know there are hundreds of others just like me whom you have touched forever. Thank you, Mother Carroll.

All my love,

Your student forever,

Joseph

Excerpted from the Broadway Bulletin, San Francisco

“And a path and a way shall be there, and it shall be called the holy way.” Isaiah 35:8
(For the Children of the Sacred Heart)

I. SING

down the avenue
of pines and enter
the Lord’s house singing.
Here
are our hands lifted up
in love and liturgy.
Here we bring
our lives in golden cup
and plate;
see our offering
made consecrate.
We kiss in peace,
and an Alleluia path
opens through our hearts,
hallows them
in joy and Christliness.
We go to share
the Eucharist, to walk now
this holy way, to prepare
a pathway in others’ lives
for the Lord.

II. OUT

to the sick, the forgotten old
and hungry poor. The ways
are endless, a maze
of heartbreaks.
Cold
the tangled road that takes
hope from even little children’s eyes.
And we grow wise
when we winnow the bitter chaff
of life’s experience from the hard-
won dram of joy that lifts,
a moment, pain’s wages and permits
suffering to laugh.
Apostleship is ours too, admits
us to the whole Christ.
We walk these ways
humbly and, we trust,
in fearless faith always.

II. “WISDOM

has built herself a house”
and laid a long
road thereto. We mask,
not unvirtuously, the strong
sting of near cowardice
that wants to ask
if learning is worth such price.
But wisdom can be tender
too and winsome, can entice
recalcitrance to yield,
to rejoice, to render
homage to her amazing legacy.
So we come once more
enthusiastically into
studyhall and classroom and adore
TRUTH
ever ancient, ever new.

IV. PATHWAYS

are for running,
are for horseback riding,
are for sunning
one’s heart joyously,
are for racing
against the wind and facing
its wild wonder,
are for finding the just right
picnic nook,
are for walking reverently at night
eyes starward,
are for outdistancing
lightning, rain, and thunder,
are for leisure, meditation,
a “best” book,
are for friends to share together
in moods and memories,
are many beautiful blends
of all of these.
“Your ways, O Lord, make known
to us; teach us Your paths.”

Anna Mae Marheineke, RSCJ

To The Third Academic

There are thirty-three
sitting expectantly before me.
I look at them and try
to plumb their thoughts, to see
in eyes, gray-blue and brown,
flames of curiosity blown
to intellect's full blossom. Light
in their earnest faces upturned
to catch, perhaps, a breath
of wisdom's fragrance burned
beautiful by years. O Lord, let
Your Spirit be their shibboleth,
Your Love beget
in them enthusiasm eager and swift
for the Truth You are. And bright
be their seeking, stirred
to unquenchable joy at the fountain
of Your Word.

Anna Mae Marheineke, RSCJ

St. Charles, 1934, Maryville

“Prince Street” Revisited

For my niece, Claire Marie II

You told me,
when I was
small,
ghosts are merely
mind-figments –
that’s all!
But they were there
today,
the Ghosts,
I mean.

I.

The red brick
school,
where we were
taught
golden rules
of do’s and don’ts,
looked wearied
from her years.
Like a grandparent,
remembering
children’s happy
laughter
and giggles
of silly,
little girls,
she stands alone.

II.

The hockey field
is overgrown;
the della Robbia
on the gymnasium
wall
is covered
with ivy.
The tower-bell
no longer rings
noon Angelus.
The Ghosts are
free
to glide from
room to room,
not in long,
silent files
to which we
felt doomed.

III.

The Ghosts are
there,
sitting in
our classroom chairs.
Are they impatient,
too, for the bell
to ring
that set us
free
to play or swing
after gouter
at three?
The Ghosts are
there
behind stained-glass
windows
where we prayed,
as young girls do.
Blue uniformed,
and sometimes white,
we processed
slowly
up the aisles,
left and right,
knelt together,
prayed together,
felt together,
and carried lilies
to Mary,
once a year.

IV.

The Ghosts are
there!
Buildings can be
bought and sold,
but not the old,
old Ghosts
of our yesterdays.
Within these
red brick walls
little girls
slowly grew
to womanhood,
dreamed their dreams...
hid their fears...
prayed their prayers...
planned their years...
learned all
children can learn
from dedicated women

of a yesteryear.

You shaped our bodies...
stretched our minds...
warmed our hearts...
stirred our souls
to reach beyond
the passing,
transient pleasures
of our everyday world
to find your God.

VI.

Strange
that you and I
should drive
together today
around
our red brick
school?
A generation
may divide us,
but the Spirit
is one.
The Ghosts are
there...
they’re
you and I,
when we were
YOUNG!

*Claire Mahaney, RSCJ
Prince Street, Rochester, 1945*

The Long View of Mission

Catherine McMahon, RSCJ

In 1836 Mother Duchesne wrote to Mother Barat: “I feel that I am a worn-out instrument, a useless walking stick that is fit only to be hidden in a dark corner....I have never at any time attracted people’s confidence, and the same thing is true here.”

Perhaps it is time to re-consider that self-evaluation in the light of an experience I had on the “Trail of Death” in 1998 with descendants of the tribe which Philippine Duchesne had come to serve.

As a child I had played with my cousins in caves below the bluffs on which the Potawatomi once held their council meetings. In shivery expectation, we half-hoped we would meet their ghosts. Something far more wonderful was to happen later in my life: I was to meet their descendants.

My unexpected adventure began as the result of an invitation in the spring of 1998 to the Midwestern Jesuit Archives in St. Louis, Missouri. The guest speaker was Mrs. Shirley Willard, president of The Fulton County Historical Society in Rochester, Indiana. More than twenty years ago, when Mrs. Willard was teaching grammar school history classes, she noted a single passage in the history text that the children used: “And so the Potawatomi went from Indiana to Kansas.” No mention of the horrors of the journey; no allusion to the cruel injustice of the event that became known as “The Trail of Death.” The teacher turned to research, seeking out the sites at which the tribe had stopped, planning to erect a bronze marker at each one, planning to educate children and adults about a sad part of earlier American history.

In 1838, she learned, 659 Potawatomi left Indiana at gunpoint, by order of the U.S. government, to be re-located in Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma – a forced march of more than 600

miles. With them was a young French priest, newly ordained, and a new arrival from France. He pleaded with his bishop to allow him to accompany the tribe, to act as a buffer between the rough soldiers and the weary Indians – men, women, children. In his notes, he recorded the suffering, and his efforts to effect some relief; he reported the burials of some forty children. Adults died, too, subject to typhoid, malaria, dysentery. Once out of their native terrain, they did not always know which fruits, berries, barks were safe to eat or use for medicinal purposes, and where pure water was. Fr. Petit, sharing their misery, also became ill, and was dying when they arrived in Kansas. Though he was not a Jesuit, “the Blackrobes” took him on horseback to the Jesuit infirmary in St. Louis, and cared for him until his death at twenty-seven years of age.

Mrs. Willard and the Potawatomi had organized every five years a commemorative caravan, not only to set up markers of the Trail of Death, but as an educational mission. The afternoon in the Jesuit archives served that purpose. In native Potawatomi dress, Mrs. Willard told how she and the caravan members tried to urge audiences to love and reverence all persons, and were eager to create an understanding of the culture of the Native American. As she finished her presentation, she remarked, “And a few years after their arrival, the Potawatomi met a woman named Philippine, who helped them. I wish I knew more about her.”

After the blessing of the plaque in the patio of the Archives, I promised to send Mrs. Willard Mother Callan’s scholarly study of the life of Philippine Duchesne. In return she sent me an invitation to join the 1998 Trail of Death in September. In preparation, I prayed that I would meet some descendants on the trail whose ancestors had known St. Philippine Duchesne. By way of material preparation, I rented a small tent with the rustic name of “The Bull Frog,” tried to find Sugar Creek on AAA maps (it wasn’t there), and decided to meet the group at Stilwell, Kansas for the installation of a new marker.

What I was looking for was an obscure field, and in the end, it was not the map that guided me, but sound – the sound of muffled drums, beating slowly, slowly, for about twenty minutes. Played by native American university students, they were intended to set the mood, to suggest the slow, heavy, dragging feet of the sick and exhausted Potawatomi walking through these fields. In a circle around the new monument, stood native Americans, school children, nearby farmers and their children, members of the caravan, bus drivers who had brought the children, and our hosts, a young couple who owned the land. They had donated it and had promised to landscape it and care for it, set as it was in the corner of the field below their home.

After Mrs. Willard's presentation, the wife of a member of the tribe, but not a Potawatomi herself, evoked for us the sights and sounds we would have heard and seen, had we been in the field in 1838: the cry of babies being born, of women weeping, soldiers shouting, horses neighing, carts groaning as they were dragged through the prairie grasses. In 1998, native Indians dancers performed a ritual dance for us, and the children sang, "We're Standing on Holy Ground."

Our hosts had provided a lunch for us in the pavilion on their grounds, refusing any remuneration because they wanted to contribute something to the travelers. While we waited for the children to be served first, Mrs. Willard introduced me to Sr. Virginia Pearl OSF as an RSCJ: "You are a Religious of the Sacred Heart? You are a miracle. God sent you. My great great grandmother, who was a child on the Trail of Death, was taught by Mother Duchesne ("Mother Rose" to the Indians) to sew and to cook. All our lives we have heard from our mothers and grandmothers, the story of the 'Madames of the Sacred Heart,' and of Mother Duchesne, and we have always hoped that some would come back would join us on these pilgrimages, but no one

has ever come.” My heart was deeply touched. So this was the reason for the inner voice I had heard when I received the invitation to join the caravan: “You are meant to go on this trek.”

What I learned, little by little, from members of the Pearl family (six brothers and sisters) was that this particular Potawatomi family has never forgotten Philippine Duchesne and her early companions. They told me the story they had not read first in Mother Callan’s book – that the native Americans had called her “the women who always prays,” and that children had dropped leaves on the hem of her habit to see how long she stayed motionless. They knew it first from the mothers of each new generation, who passed on the words and the experience of Teresa Living.

Teresa had been a tiny survivor of the Trail of Death, orphaned en route to Missouri. Perhaps someone carried her when carts broke down, horses died, but she arrived, alive, at Sugar Creek. When Philippine and her first little band arrived in 1841, they took Teresa to live with them and taught her, though they had not yet a boarding school. The tribe had added a new name to Teresa, “Teresa Living,” because she had survived. She learned prayers from Philippine. It is usually said that Mother Duchesne could not learn the language of the tribe, but Fr. Hoecken, SJ had mastered it, and he wrote down simple prayers for her in Potawatomi. Philippine memorized them and taught Teresa in her own language (“Our Father, Hail Mary,” etc.). It is a fact of which all the Pearls are very proud – that they learned prayer in their own language. When she married an Irish trader, Mr. Slevin (or Slavin), Theresa taught her children these prayers. She had eight children, and each passed on the teaching of Teresa, and her gratitude for “Blackrobes,” “Madames of the Sacred Heart,” and “Mother Rose.” When we eventually moved on to St. Mary’s, Kansas, in a long caravan of cars, vans, trucks, recreational vehicles equipped with CB radios (no “smoke signals” for today’s Potawatomi), yet another series of adventures awaited me.

The entire town was celebrating the 150th anniversary of the coming of the Blackrobes and the Religious of the Sacred Heart. A holiday had been proclaimed by the Mayor of St. Mary's. In the afternoon, there was a parade of about twenty-six floats. I was fortunate enough to be invited to the home of Mrs. Marge Guerich, the eldest of the Pearl family, and a dynamic organizer. When I arrived, her rooms were full of children who were coloring posters and borders and signs; Mrs. Guerich was making mountains of peanut-butter sandwiches to feed the energies of the artists. Suddenly, one of the bedroom doors burst open, and two miniature RSCJ walked out, very sedately, dressed in a home-made replica of the habit, including frilled cap, veil, and side-beads. With them with two small "students," dressed in nineteenth century crinoline skirts and shawls, and one little boy in short pants and jacket, cap, reminiscent of Oliver Twist and David Copperfield. Several of them belonged to the Pearl family, others were neighbors (also learning about "Mother Rose"). Mrs. Guerich, the grand-mother, had been the vehicle for the "race memory." A second door flew open, and out walked a solemn, perfectly attired four-foot Jesuit, cassock swinging, biretta fashioned from black construction paper neatly stapled. One of the relatives and his little daughter had built a teepee for the float on which children, caravan guests, friends were to ride through the city.

We hurried down the street to find the number of our float – a long, long flat car from the farm, filled with bales of hay for seats, and featuring a teepee in the middle. The little nuns and their students and the Jesuit sat or stood on bales at one end. The Potawatomi on pilgrimage in bright shirts and head bands, lined the decorated float and waved to the townspeople gathered on the street. Judges meticulously made notes on large pads to determine the prizes. The float was attached to a huge John Deere tractor, competently driven by an eighteen-year-old Pearl girl whose father was a local farmer. School bands accompanied us, small children waited hopefully

for pieces of wrapped candy to be flung in their direction; dogs jumped and barked, and we all called out in Potawatomi, “How-ni-kan!” (“Hello, friend”). Middle-western America was “on parade,” and the joy was infectious.

Later in the afternoon, we were invited to the Museum, where members of the Historical Society of St. Mary’s served as knowledgeable guides about artifacts, charts and pictures that gave insight in 150 years of history. The lower floor of the Museum had been prepared for a Mass, the altar placed directly under the enormous head of a stuffed bison, glaring balefully at us. The double doors of the museum opened, and Benedictines, Jesuits, secular priests, entered. The curators had thoughtfully prepared treasures from the past for their use: a chalice used by Fr. de Smedt, SJ (not the pioneer Fr. de Smet), a catechism written in Potawatomi by the brilliant linguist, Fr. Hoecken, SJ, and the first prayer book he had written, with the prayers that Teresa Living would have learned from Mother Duchesne; a crucifix, burned almost to the melting point, but still recognizable, on white satin in an archivist’s display box; and most touching, a three-foot white statue of Our Lady. Her eyes are cast down, and the sculptor had made no attempt to simulate eye-balls, so the Potawatomi called her “the Blind Madonna.” They prayed to her “because she could not see their sins.” Once more we sang, “We’re Standing on Holy Ground.” The vice-provincial of the Jesuits spoke of the legacy of the early pioneers, both religious and secular. It was not too difficult to imagine them standing near us in these moments of communion around the altar.

As we left the museum, Sr. Virginia Pearl and her brother Bob took me aside and whispered, “We have something we want to show you.” They drove me high above the city to an isolated and ancient graveyard, above the buildings originally occupied by the Jesuit college there, and for a time, by the Religious of the Sacred Heart after they left Sugar Creek. My guides

stopped before the grave of Teresa Living Slevin, surrounded by plaques bearing the names of her eight children. Here, I asked them to teach me to pray, native American fashion: to the East, the symbol of new beginnings; to the West, symbol of harmony and peaceful endings; to the South, place of warmth and maturation; to the North, where we prayed for “the wisdom of our ancestors.” Afterward, we sprinkled the grave with tobacco leaves cut into small pieces (the peace pipe once had been outlawed by the government in its effort to destroy Indian culture; tobacco was then substituted for ritual use).

Quietly, they said to me, “And now, we will take you to your people.” We walked to the other side of the small cemetery, and there, high on the hill, was the monument marking the graves of the seven RSCJ from pioneer days: Mother Mathevon and some of Philippine’s colleagues in the New World. I felt a deep gratitude to these women for their courageous lives. If I had quite unknowingly brought two Potawatomi back to them, they had prepared my re-discovery of the Potawatomi people in the twentieth century. Again, we prayed, silently, in the four directions, and sprinkled tobacco around the monument. “How-ni-kan, dear sisters.”

The evening entertainment was once more the work of Mrs. Guerich, who had organized the Knights of Columbus and their wives to prepare a splendid commemorative dinner for us. A folder at each place indicated that the celebration was for the “coming of the Black Robes and the RSCJ” 150 years ago – and it featured a copy of a painting of Mother Duchesne. On a center table was the astonishing work of a baker: a recreation in chocolate of the first little church built by the Jesuits: logs made of rolled chocolate, spire crafted from stiff white frosting. Beside the pastry lay an old photograph of the original. The two-foot replica beside it was perfect. A Jesuit read from Fr. Petit’s journal for the “Grace before Meals,” and ended the evening after dinner with another selection from the journal of this valiant young priest.

There were memorable experiences at Sugar Creek as well. Sugar Creek is basically two farmers' fields; it has few amenities – just the “felt presence” of those who lived there in the 1800's. Imagine a moonlit night. A local parish group had supplied dinner (transporting all that was necessary to cook; there are no kitchen facilities there, no electricity). Present: members of the caravan, a local confirmation class, and their teachers. Location: the tiny “trading post” built by Fr. Poole in recent years. On its veranda sat the confirmation class. On the grass, in lawn chairs or on cushions sat the other guests. Mrs. Willard made her thoughtful presentation, then asked members of the caravan who were direct descendants to tell a little of their experience as Potawatomi, and as travelers on the caravan. Sr. Virginia Pearl rose to say that there was a Religious of the Sacred Heart present, and she would tell a story of Mother Duchesne at Sugar Creek, and would they please mime it as she spoke? “Do what her words suggest to you.” The most familiar and simple story was of the Potawatomi admiration of the woman who prays always, so I launched into a description of the way that the children tested her. Sr. Pearl quietly, in Indian dress, knelt before me and held her hands folded in prayer. Slowly, one by one, children jumped down from the porch, searched for leaves and pebbles, and as I spoke, put them on the hem of Sister's Indian skirt. This vision, under a full moon, in the silence of the country, with a genuine Potawatomi before me acting the part of Philippine, and children imitating their earlier counterparts, was almost too much to bear in its simple beauty – in that place, at that time. I grew cold. Sr. Virginia brought me an Indian shawl and put it round me, saying: “We are taking you into the tribe.”

There is a custom observed on the caravan. On the final night, all gather round a great bonfire and discuss what they have experienced on the caravan, make suggestions for improvements for another year, express thanks to the organizers of each event. But on our last

night, a heavy rain fell. So one of the Pearl brothers invited us to his home, and in a large parlor, lighted only by a triangular candle, Mrs. Willard initiated the discussion. What had the pilgrimage meant to us? I awaited the moment to thank them for a memorable experience. I had felt so at home with them (they had taken me into their homes each night – I never saw the inside of The Bull Frog). I felt protected and safe, noting that they never deserted anybody with car trouble, illness, or some momentary problem. The caravan waited patiently until the problem was settled. No one was “abandoned.” And I was grateful to them for what they had shared of the joys and sorrows of their lives, of their tribe. Bob Pearl spoke from the shadows across the room: “All my life I have wanted to meet a Religious of the Sacred Heart, because our Mother spoke of them so much, but our paths never crossed. And now you have come to us and we are grateful that you joined us. You have been a spiritual presence among us.” I felt very small and wondered if we had ever done enough for these people who had kept our memory alive for decades without actual contact with us. Yes, there was the canonization – but those chosen to represent the tribe had no direct knowledge of Philippine, had not lived at Sugar Creek. There were no Pearls there.

I tried to make up for this by responding at once when they made a request for tickets to the Papal Mass. With help, I was able to find enough to invite seven Potawatomi and to invite them to live in our guest cottage at Villa Duchesne. On another moonlit night: we waited at 2:30 a.m. in the parking lot of a nearby college for great yellow school buses – another colorful caravan – which took hundreds down to the doors of the TWA dome.

“May we wear our native dress?” I answered that the Pope was their Chief, and they were honoring him. So at the moment of his appearance on the floor of the arena in his Pope mobile, I looked down the row. They had taken off their coats, and there were the bright shirts, shawls, head-bands of these people who have been faithful to the Church for 150 years. I wish John Paul

II could have met them. They have educated their children well, in many professions, and as good parents. They have loved the land and cared for it, though times are hard for the farmer. They have close family life, and they treasure their traditions and their memories. They have kept the Faith.

In 1999, when a large group of RSCJ celebrated a Golden Jubilee, I among them, I invited them all to Sugar Creek and St. Mary's. The story has been told elsewhere, but the one (mental) photograph I have is this: On the morning that our van left St. Mary's for Sugar Creek, Mrs. Guerich and Sr. Virginia Pearl asked the driver to stop briefly at the 150 year old Church near her home. She and Virginia are Eucharistic ministers, and there, they gave us Holy Communion before we left on this last part of our pilgrimage. We made our Thanksgiving en route to Sugar Creek.

I recalled Philippine's descriptions of the Potawatomi sent to Mother Barat: "they remind me of the first Christians." And today they are the same.

No, Mother Duchesne was not a "worn-out instrument, a useless walking stick that is fit only to be hidden in a dark corner..." She was a shining light in the life of an orphan who "remembered" her and passed her memories on to later generations of her family. She could not learn Potawatomi language but they learned hers: the language of hard work, love, kindness, generosity, fidelity. She did win hearts. She "attracted the confidence" of the Potawatomi. Her spiritual descendants of Sugar Creek days will take her lessons to the four directions of the world, having "drawn wisdom from the ancestors."

Catherine McMahon, RSCJ, attended Duchesne College, Omaha; she is on the staff of the National Archives of the Society of the Sacred Heart in St. Louis.

The Chain of Love

Margaret Connolly, RSCJ, Point Grey, Vancouver, B.C., Canada.

One of the most moving and memorable traditions at Sacred Heart Schools in Canada is the ceremony of the Chain of Love. It was a dream of Sister Margaret Power and began at the Montreal Convent, Sault au Recollet, in the 1950s. It continues at the Sacred Heart school in Halifax, Nova Scotia, to this day.

It consists of a chain of golden paper links bearing the name of each student in the school. It takes place, outdoors if possible, on one of the final days of the school year.

At the Vancouver school, with which I am most familiar, the high school graduates, in white cap and gown, lined up on the front driveway carrying the Chain on their right shoulders. In solemn procession to the stirring strains of “Land of Hope and Glory,” they proceeded up the driveway to a circular path in front of the imposing *porte cochere* at the entrance.

Along the path, the Grade Eleven students waited for the procession to reach them. The graduates lined up beside the Grade Eleven students, and the assembled students sang the school song. Then the Chain was solemnly passed to the next year’s graduates who led the students back into the building for the closing liturgy of the school year.

The Chain was placed on the altar as a symbol of the continuity of the loving spirit of the Sacred Heart. One of my most poignant memories came at the time of the closing of the Vancouver Convent in 1979. We symbolically burned the Chain and placed the ashes in the flower bed near where the ceremony had taken place. Some years later we had occasion to recount this event to the boys of St. George’s Junior School who now occupy our school building. We challenged them to carry on the spirit of love symbolized by this beautiful ceremony.

Prize Day

D'Arcy Wilson, Halifax, 2001

“The one hundred and fiftieth distribution of prizes. Honor and glory to God alone.” With that, we are seated.

The Little Theatre is stuffy, as it is overflowing with students awaiting summer. The graduates are together at the front of the stage, while their families admire them with pride from the front of the room. Teachers are seated facing the student body. The guests are behind them, all of whom are delighted to witness the rich tradition of the Sacred Heart Prize Day. The windows are open, and a light breeze pushes through the crowded room. Spring garden sounds sift through the screen and mingle with the piano music.

Uniforms are freshly pressed, hair is shining, and backs are pressed against the chairs.

The grade sevens are seated in the front row facing faculty and friends. It was a long year for them, full of growth and change. Although unsure of themselves at first, by grade eight they will have eased into the high school.

Among the grade nines, there are a handful who will not return to the school. They say they need a change, that they can't wait to “get out,” but why is it that those girls will visit Sacred Heart in the fall and say, “I really miss this place”?

As the chain of love is carried to the front of the room, the graduates wipe tears from their eyes. This is a special moment. The room is silent except for the voices of the women at the front of the theatre, reading a prayer. The chain then passed on to the next year's graduates, linking all the generations of the Sacred Heart together. They are bound by experiences and slivers of golden paper. The white robed girls leave, and the room feels empty. The grade elevens take their places on stage, and the room seems full again. Next year their names will be added to the chain, and the circle will continue.

Prize Day is nearing its close. Prizes have been won, and students walk side by side down the centre aisle where there is a Persian rug to greet their feet. That rug must be as old as the school itself; however, it never seems to wear out. It is the property of Prize Day, adding dignity and distinction.

The real prize of the day is the satisfaction of completing the year. Goals were accomplished, each one helping a person to grow. Each soul was nourished and each mind was challenged. The privilege to be who we are is a prize as well, and what better way to discover that than to spend a year daring to be true. The bond of friendship and the power of a smile are valuable lessons learned. These are gifts to be treasured and remembered and passed on for the years to come.

*From the land of the burning sunshine, to the
cold and barren north,
From the rock bound isles where ocean smiles, let
the hymn of praise go forth.
From the furthest lonely places,
Where the bird's sweet carols sing,
Let a hymn be sung by old and young
In praise of Christ our God and King.*

After a last address, the students slowly seep out of the Little Theatre. They pack their bags and give whole-hearted hugs to their friends. Although everyone is cheerful, the Little Theatre feels sad and almost hollow as the occasional footsteps echo through. No matter. Next year, Prize Day will occur again. The Persian rug will be let down, more names will be added to the golden chain of love, and prizes will be won, while spring garden sounds continue sifting through the screens.

Will It Always Be?

Joyce Sherman Comfort, Hilltop, St. Joseph, Missouri, 1948

On October 16, 1999, 112 members of the Sacred Heart Alumnae of the Convent of the Sacred Heart in St. Joseph, Missouri met for their annual luncheon and business meeting. Members of the celebrating classes of 1939, 1944, 1949, and 1954 were introduced. One 1929 graduate introduced herself. What is so unusual about this gathering of ladies educated by the Sacred Heart nuns in the twenties, thirties, forties, and fifties in St. Joseph? Why do they return each year to spend an hour or two with old friends, their classmates for four years, and reminisce about their Convent days together?

Their high school, opened in 1857, closed in 1960. The youngest alumnae are 57 years old. Someday there will be no luncheon because there will be no Alumnae of the Sacred Heart in St. Joseph, so why did these women meet to honor a school that ceased to exist thirty-nine years ago?

Perhaps part of the answer can be found in their school song sung by the ladies at the luncheon and written by Agatha Pfeiffer for the Convent students many, many years ago. It reflects their devotion to Mary in the persona of Mater Admirabilis (Mother Most Admirable), fostered by the nuns during their four years as students at the Convent. This school song has become a very sentimental expression of our love for Mater and also of our fond memories of the Sacred Heart nuns who introduced us to Mater.

Each fall, grade school graduates trudged up the steep 12th Street hill to become not only students of the Sacred Heart but to be known from then on as Children of the Sacred Heart, to be molded into caring, spiritual young ladies by the teaching nuns over the next four years. To mold some of us must have seemed like an insurmountable task to

the nuns, then called Mother by their students. But no matter how some of us balked, we “took the training,” accepting our teachers’ high scholastic standards and their challenging us to do our best always, not only as students but throughout our lives as Catholic women.

Too often we forget to thank those from our past who helped us become the persons we are today. But when 112 women gather together and sing , “*O Mother, will it always be that every passing year, Will make thee seem more beautiful, will make thee grow more dear?*” they are not only praising Mater but also raising their voices in thanks to the Sacred Heart nuns who educated them academically and spiritually in a school in St. Joseph, Missouri that is no more.

*O Mother will it always be
That every passing year
Will make thee seem more beautiful,
Will make thee grow more dear?*

*How near to God, how dear to God,
Dear Mother thou must be –
We scarce can raise our hearts to Him,
Unless we think of thee.*

*O Mother thou art fair to see,
More fair than starry night,
Thy radiance is a tender beam
From God’s own heav’nly light*

*Ah this we know, how true it is
That every passing year
Will make thee seem more beautiful,
Will make thee grow more dear*

*All pure, all good, all sinless thou,
Beyond mere human ken
All tender and all pitying,
Toward us, frail sons of men*

*The more we seek to know thy heart,
The more there is to learn –
Like thee to be most rich in grace,
We pray and hope and yearn.*