

# LIVING HISTORY

The Generalate of  
PATRICIA CONNOR RSHM  
1985 - 1995

## IV



SOURCES OF LIFE  
Study and Reflection on the RSHM Heritage





PATRICIA CONNOR RSHM

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Publication of the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary



**Patricia Connor, RSHM**  
**General Superior 1985-1995**



# Contents

<b>Preface.....</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>Acknowledgements.....</b>	<b>x</b>
<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1: First Term – 1985 to 1990.....</b>	<b>3</b>
General Chapter 1985.....	3
Personal Remembrance of General Chapter 1985.....	4
The Institute in France .....	7
Becoming a Vice-Province.....	8
Congregational Planning.....	12
Self-Study Questionnaire.....	14
Coopers & Lybrand Analysis of Self-Study .....	17
Designing the Corporate Reflection Process.....	19
Corporate Reflection Process – First Round .....	20
Draft of the Mission Statement .....	21
Corporate Reflection Process – Second Round.....	22
Revised Draft of Mission Statement sent to Sisters.....	22
Institute Criteria for Ministry .....	23
Enlarged General Council ratifies Mission Statement.....	23
Inter-Africa Assembly.....	24
Inter-Africa Coordinator.....	27
Sharing Resources .....	28
Sharing Resources Task Force .....	31
Recommendations .....	32
Mozambique.....	33

Initial Formation .....	35
Initial Formation Task Force .....	35
Journey to Establish a Novitiate for Zambia and Zimbabwe ....	38
Ongoing Formation .....	40
Centenary of the Death of Father Gailhac .....	44
General Chapter 1990 .....	49
<b>2: Second Term – 1990-1995 .....</b>	<b>57</b>
First Year after General Chapter 1990 .....	57
Using the Mission Statement .....	60
The Service of Those Most in Need of Justice .....	62
Inter-Africa Coordinator .....	64
Mali .....	66
Zambia-Zimbabwe Novitiate .....	67
Mozambique .....	71
Ongoing Formation .....	74
Task Force on Ongoing Formation .....	75
Guidelines for Ongoing Formation .....	76
French Vice-Province .....	77
Evaluation of collaborative structure .....	78
Finances .....	78
Financial and Spiritual Patrimony .....	79
New Initiative .....	80
Experience of Internationality for Newer Members .....	83
Planning Committee .....	84
Phases of Experience .....	84
Béziers and Braga .....	86
Evaluation .....	88



Leadership .....	89
Sharing Resources .....	93
A Region for the RSHM in Zambia and Zimbabwe.....	96
General Government.....	101
General Government Task Force.....	101
Recommendations .....	103
General Chapter 1995.....	105
Last Months .....	109
<b>3: Overview .....</b>	<b>113</b>
Church.....	113
Inserted in the Realities of the Church .....	113
Pope John Paul II (Now Saint John Paul II) .....	114
Some Church events.....	116
Rome.....	117
Northern Ireland.....	119
Consultation for Process of Appointments .....	120
Enlarged General Council .....	123
Sources of Life .....	126
Communications.....	129
Global Trends.....	132
Some Historical Events .....	132
Trends in Institute .....	134
Significant People .....	135
<b>Appendices .....</b>	<b>139</b>
<b>Photographic Addendum .....</b>	<b>154</b>
<b>Biographical Information.....</b>	<b>179</b>

## **Key to Initials Used**

<b>B</b>	Brazilian Province
<b>EAP</b>	Eastern American Province
<b>EIP</b>	English-Irish Province
<b>F</b>	French Province/French Vice-Province
<b>P</b>	Portuguese Province
<b>WAP</b>	Western American Province
<b>M</b>	Region of Mozambique
<b>Z</b>	Zambia-Zimbabwe

The English-Irish Province and the French Vice-Province are now the Northern European Province.

Zambia and Zimbabwe are now the Zambezi Region.





## Preface

In 1849, Jean Gailhac founded the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary in Béziers, France. Since that time, his spiritual daughters have been sent throughout the world and presently minister in fourteen countries on four different continents.

The congregation has carefully kept a record of its early history and, under the auspices of the RSHM Sources of Life, studies and reflections on the RSHM heritage have been published. During the past fifteen years, it has published the four volume series entitled *A Journey in Faith and Time* which presents the history of the congregation during the leadership of the first four general superiors: M. St. Jean Cure Pélissier, foundress (1849-1869), M. Ste. Croix Vidal (1869-1878), M. St. Félix Maymard (1878-1905) and M. Ste. Constance Farret (1905-1926).

The Sources of Life, then under the coordination of Majorie Keenan, RSHM, suggested that the recent history of the congregation could best be remembered through the lens of the living general superiors reflecting back on the events of their own years in office. Their willingness has launched the series of books entitled *Living History*. This present volume is the fourth in the series. The earlier *Living History* volumes were written by:

Volume I: Sr. Margarida Maria Goncalves (1963-1975) who, as 8<sup>th</sup> general superior, led the RSHM during the Second Vatican Council, a time when both the world and the Church were in a state of profound transformation. She held the RSHM congregation together by her understanding and grace-filled leadership during the stress of Extraordinary Chapters and the changes called for by the renewal of Religious Life.

Volume II: Sr. Maria de Lourdes Machado (1975-1980) was elected 9<sup>th</sup> general superior by the General Chapter of 1975 which promulgated the document "Mission: A Call to Justice." Her leadership echoed the spirit of the Second Bishops' Synod which declared that "the promotion of justice is an integral part of the Mission of the Church." The Institute was challenged by M. de Lourdes' commitment to the insights of the Latin American bishops, meeting in Medellin and Puebla, which called the total Church to a preferential option for the poor.

Volume III: Sr. Mary Milligan (1980-1985), the 10<sup>th</sup> general superior, was elected by the General Chapter of 1980 which unanimously accepted the revised Constitutions which she had been instrumental in preparing. Her familiarity with Rome and with the Vatican proved to be a great asset in having these Constitutions approved by the Sacred Congregation within two years. The Constitutions retreats, coordinated by Mary, helped the sisters in the congregation to understand and internalize the Constitutions. Her letters to the Institute revealed her theological and scriptural knowledge, her eagerness to refer to various encyclicals kept the sisters aware of developments in the official Church, and her love for the Sources of the Institute heightened the sisters' love for our founder and founding sisters.

This present volume is written by Sr. Patricia Connor, the 11<sup>th</sup> general superior (1985-1995). One senses immediately the spirit of collaboration, broad consultation and meticulous planning that characterized her two terms. Her general council initiated a congregational planning process that incorporated and coordinated planning in each of the provinces and region. Each sister in the Institute was invited to affirm or not affirm the Mission Statement



prior to its acceptance by the General Chapter of 1990. 'Process of Discernment on Choice and Evaluation of Ministry' and the 'Consultation Process for the Appointment of Provincial/Vice-Provincial and Regional Superiors' were developed. A novitiate was re-opened and another was opened in Africa. New structures were developed for the French Vice-Province and the new Zambezi Region, but only after careful consultation with those involved.

These volumes of *Living History* lead us to a deeper understanding of the service given to all of us by the women on the general level who have accepted the role of general superior or served on the general council or general team for the good of the Institute. They have all earned our gratitude.

Kathleen Connell, RSHM

November 2016

## Acknowledgements

I had much help with this Living History. In the beginning, there was Marjorie Keenan, RSHM, who saw the value of former general superiors writing about the history of the Institute during the years they served. Thank you for the inspiration, Marjorie. Thank you, Maria Antónia Quintero Lopes, RSHM, Sources Coordinator after Marjorie, for urging me several times to write my remembrances of the Institute during the ten years I served as General Superior.

Thank you, Mary Genino, RSHM, who as Provincial of the Western American Province, supported my going to Rome to work in the Archives at the Generalate; thank you to the Generalate Community for your warm hospitality for a month in 2012; thank you, John Bosco Gorla, RSHM, Institute Archivist, for opening the Archives and making available to me whatever I needed, including photos from the Archives for this Living History.

Thank you, Joan Treacy, RSHM, present Provincial of the Western American Province, who supported and encouraged me in many ways and offered helpful comments and suggestions. Thank you, Virginia Joseph, RSHM, and Audrey Rushton, RSHM, members of my local community, for supporting me in countless ways throughout my working on this project. Thank you, Mary Leah Plante, RSHM, Western American Province Archivist, for finding useful information from our Province Archives and for helping me feel at home when I stayed at Sichel Street, Los Angeles.

A special thank you to my RSHM sisters: Maria Lúcia Brandão, Bernadette McNamara, Catherine Dolan, Rosemary Lenahan, Mary Alice Young, Mary (Marianne) Murray, and Rosa

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# LIVING HISTORY

## IV

### INTRODUCTION

When I recall my two terms at the general level, from 1985-1995, I recall not only the experiences we lived, but perhaps more importantly, what the meaning of those experiences was for the Institute. I remember the invitations that came to us in our ongoing call to follow Jesus Christ, and I remember our responses and what we went through in responding – the process, the pain and the struggle, the uncertainty, and in many instances, the leap of faith. In looking back now and knowing what has happened in the intervening years, I can see how God was fashioning the Institute in and through the particular, concrete historical challenges we faced. There were many. We were uncertain where our responses would lead, and we went forward in faith.

I carry with me still what we experienced and lived during those ten years. Perhaps what I shared with members of the Enlarged General Council at the opening of our meeting in Braga, Portugal, on July 27, 1987, is a good way to begin this Living History of the Institute during the years 1985-1995.

Our Constitutions begin with the statement of our belief that God calls us to a journey in faith, a journey that we make as individuals, and as an Institute. Usually one only discovers the full implications of making a journey when one is actually on the road, traveling. Then, one encounters... the inconveniences, the difficulties, the hazards – but also, the pleasant surprises, the wonderful discoveries, the unexpected moments of growth. And so,

I believe, it is with us. It is in the midst of our experiences of the journey, through what we encounter along the way, that we are called to an ever deeper relationship with God and to a continual discovery of God's action in our lives.



## **FIRST TERM: 1985-1990**

### **GENERAL CHAPTER 1985**

The General Chapter 1985 was the first general chapter since our new Constitutions were approved in 1980. Between Chapters the Constitutions had been approved by the Sacred Congregation for Religious on February 24, 1983. The challenges of the Constitutions reverberated in our ears. We had been studying them on Constitutions retreats, focusing on them in our provinces and region, and praying with them personally and in our local communities. We wanted to en flesh these words in the life of our Institute and in our personal lives.

In 1983, two years before the general chapter, we had been asked to dream about the next ten years in order to arrive at a theme of the general chapter. One theme that emerged was a desire for greater collaboration – collaboration among us Institute-wide and with all members of the human family. The second theme was the use of our resources at the service of evangelical justice. Thus the theme chosen for the general chapter was: Collaboration for the Mission of the Church in the World – the Use of Our Resources at the Service of Evangelical Justice.

According to General Secretary Sr. Catherine Dolan's Statistical Report to the General Chapter 1985, as of December 31, 1984, we were 1332 members, of which 26 were in First Vows, in six provinces, one region, and the general level, with the following membership:

- Brazilian Province: 166
- Eastern American Province: 330
- English-Irish Province: 210

- French Province: 48
- Region of Mozambique: 29
- Portuguese Province: 429
- Western American Province 116
- General Level: 4

The General Chapter 1985 called us forward in four areas: Commitment to and Education for Justice, Internationality and Sharing Resources, Formation, and Planning.

Sr. Patricia Connor (WAP) was elected general superior, and Sr. Maria Lúcia Brandão (P) and Sr. Bernadette McNamara (F) were each elected general councillor.

### **PERSONAL REMEMBRANCE OF GENERAL CHAPTER 1985**

To this day I remember vividly the General Chapter 1985 held at Monte Cucco, Rome. Sr. Donna Kenney, SC, from Leavenworth, Kentucky, was our facilitator. When we came together, there were not as many of us Institute-wide as there had been at the last general chapter in 1980. Our median age had increased since 1980. We were conscious of our smaller numbers and our rising median age. There was a strong sense that our efforts were scattered and fragmented and that there was a dispersal of our energies at the level of ministries. We felt the poverty of our resources. What was being called for was Revitalization for Mission and an Institute-wide process of Congregational Planning that would touch all aspects of our life.

I remember very well the concluding Eucharistic Liturgy of the Chapter. The Gospel was the story of the Multiplication of the Loaves and Fishes. Having been elected the next General Superior,

I was asked to give the reflection at the Closing Eucharistic Liturgy. I remember thinking how well the Gospel story spoke to what we had experienced at the Chapter. The needs of the world were so great and our resources were limited, and we knew in the years to come they would become even more limited. The expression 'down-sizing' was not yet common in our vocabulary, but that seemed to be what we were being called to. Yet the teaching of Jesus in the Gospel story was that in spite of limited resources, there will be enough, even a superfluity, if each one shares what she has. That was comforting to me as I returned to Los Angeles at the end of the general chapter.

I went home to California in early August and planned to return to Rome in early November. In the Western American Province we had had a transition in Province leadership on July 1, 1985, a few days before the opening of the general chapter. Sr. Joan Treacy (WAP), our new Provincial, had asked me to be Provincial Treasurer. When I was elected General Superior, I had been Provincial Treasurer for four weeks. In addition to taking on that role, I was planning to teach part-time at Sacred Heart of Mary High School in Montebello. On the last day of the general chapter, in an instant, the role and responsibilities of general superior were transferred from Sr. Mary Milligan to me. I remember how abrupt it was for me personally not to have had any transition time, to take on something new without any time to let go of existing commitments. There were some immediate Institute matters that were pending, and these were explained to me, in a general way, before I left Rome.

Sr. Mary Milligan continued in Rome after the general chapter. Mary and I had agreed that she would return to Southern

California in late October, and a few days later, I would leave for Rome. Bernadette McNamara also planned to come to Rome in early November. Maria Lúcia Brandão would already be at the Generalate.

It was a gift that Maria Lucia Brandão continued as general councillor for a second term. Her knowledge of the Institute, experience with the previous General Council, and wisdom were invaluable. Thankfully Sr. Catherine Dolan (EIP) generously accepted to continue as General Secretary for two additional years and that, too, was a great gift. Catherine had served as General Secretary with Sr. Mary Milligan and her Council, and she contributed tremendously in that role from the beginning of the new General Council's term in 1985 until September 1987. Sr. Judith Lupo (B) continued as General Treasurer until February 24, 1986, when Sr. Rosemary Lenehan (EIP) assumed the role of General Treasurer. Judith remained at the Generalate until summer in Rome, training Rosemary in her new role and working with the General Team in designing the Institute Self-Study.

Bernadette McNamara and I arrived in Rome in early November 1985. A few days later, Maria Lúcia, Bernadette, and I met for the first time, as General Council.

## THE INSTITUTE IN FRANCE

1985-1990

One of the first matters the General Council, Maria Lúcia Brandão, Bernadette McNamara, and I, faced when we came together in November 1985 was the appointment of a new provincial of the French Province. When Bernadette McNamara was elected general councillor at the general chapter, she was Provincial of the French Province. Her term as Provincial had been extended by special Indult beyond two terms of three years. A consultation with the French Province was needed. Sr. Gabrielle O'Regan (EIP) was going to finish her second term as Provincial of the English-Irish Province in the coming months, and there also was need for a province consultation for the appointment of a new provincial there. In consultation with Gabrielle, we designed a process for the consultation of a new provincial. This type of consultation process, while familiar to those of us who were in the Institute in 1986, was something new at the time. Gabrielle O'Regan and the sisters of the English-Irish Province and the sisters of the French Province were marvelously open and flexible, and, with relatively short notice, assemblies were scheduled to begin each of the consultations.

Maria Lúcia, Bernadette, and I left for Paris on December 27, 1985 to begin the consultation with the French Province. We left the Generalate for the airport that fateful day not knowing that there had just been a terrorist attack at Leonardo da Vinci-Fiumicino Airport. When we arrived at the airport, Sr. Judith Lupo, who drove us, was unable to stop the car at any of the terminals. As we circled the airport, we saw crowds of people standing outside the terminal and mortuary vans at the curb. Listening to a transistor radio, we learned there had been a terrorist attack. Judith

eventually dropped us off, and the three of us joined those waiting outside the terminal. Once we could enter, we saw a hastily constructed wooden barrier next to the check-in for our flight to Paris. It blocked off the coffee shop and the ticket counters for some of the international airlines. That evening in Paris, when Maria Lúcia, Bernadette, and I were having dinner, we heard more news of the attack, but it was not until the next morning that we saw in the newspaper a photograph of the terrible carnage – 16 people were killed and 99 wounded. We were shocked at the number of casualties. We had not yet known that one of those killed was an 11-year-old student from Marymount International School, Rome.

The consultation of the English-Irish Province went forward in the early months of 1986, and Sr. Josepha O’Sullivan (EIP) was appointed the new Provincial of the English-Irish Province. In the French Province consultation, only one out of seven sisters suggested was willing to go forward in the process. There were 48 sisters in the French Province at the end of 1984. A good number of these were elderly. While the number in France was small, the property to manage was significant. After giving much thought to the situation, it seemed to us, as General Council, that it was time to raise the question of whether the existing structure of the French Province was adequate for carrying out all the functions of a province.

#### *Becoming a Vice-Province*

At this time, as on so many other occasions in the years that followed, we sought the advice and guidance of Fr. William Hogan, CSC, a canon lawyer and past general Councillor of the Congregation of Holy Cross. Fr. Bill had much experience in helping international congregations deal with the issue of



restructuring, and his advice was invaluable. There was the immediate need that a legal representative of the Institute be appointed in France to replace Bernadette McNamara in that area, so the general council appointed a provincial Councillor, Marguerite-Marie Lyng (F) to take on this responsibility while Bernadette continued to deal with other aspects of Provincial until July 1987. We then asked our sisters in France to consider possibilities for the way forward. Fr. Bill had been extremely helpful in describing possible alternative structures and the characteristics of each. Sisters of the French Province considered these, along with areas in which collaboration could be particularly beneficial, and then made a recommendation to the general council on the future structure of the French Province. Foreseeing that the prolongation of Bernadette McNamara's term as Provincial would end at the end of the enlarged general council meeting in August, Sr. Marguerite-Marie Lyng was named Provincial of the French Province for a period of transition, to begin August 10, 1987.

At the enlarged general council meeting in Braga in 1987, facilitated by Fr. Bill Hogan, Marguerite-Marie Lyng and the general council brought before the enlarged general council a recommendation on the future structure of the French Province. According to the recommendation, the French Province would become a vice-province and have a special relationship with one of our provinces, especially in the areas of finances and initial and ongoing formation, so that the small number in France could be part of something larger. Fr. Bill helped us greatly in the very serious and sombre reflection on which province would be best for a special collaboration.

The discernment led the enlarged general council to see that the most possibilities for our sisters in France lay in entering into a special relationship with the English-Irish Province. This possibility was then to be presented to our sisters of the French Province and to our sisters of the English-Irish Province through a series of assemblies to get their opinion. A very simple description of a vice-province was drawn up. We explained that the details of organization and areas of collaboration would be worked out by an *ad hoc* Committee composed of sisters of the English-Irish Province, French Province, and General Council. Assemblies took place in the latter part of 1987 and in January 1988. Bernadette McNamara was present at each Assembly in France, in England, and in Ireland, along with a member of the English-Irish Provincial Council, and Marguerite-Marie Lyng, Provincial of the French Province, to hear the opinions of the sisters. We made sure we heard, too, the opinions of our sisters of the English-Irish Province in Brazil and in Zambia.

There were, understandably, reservations and questions. However, the interest from both the French Province and the English-Irish Province was sufficient enough to bring representatives of both together to meet with the general council in Rome to lay out what possible areas of collaboration there could be. This *ad hoc* Committee on Structuring the French Province met during two weekends in April and May, 1988. Srs. Joyce Attwood and Máire O'Donnell of the English-Irish Province, and Srs. Marguerite-Marie Lyng and Myriam Bécourt of the French Province were members of this *ad hoc* Committee. Again, Fr. Bill Hogan was with us to facilitate the meeting and to provide invaluable information from his wealth of experience. The result of

the meeting was a possible plan of collaboration, with fuller collaboration in Initial Formation, Vocation Awareness, Ongoing Formation, and Finance Patrimony.

The formal structure of collaboration included the important element of accountability. This was then sent on to the two provincial councils. We all understood that the Vice-Province was the most feasible structure at that time and that evaluation would be built into the relationship. On July 1, 1988, the general council gave permission for the establishment of the French Vice-Province and the collaborative structure with the English-Irish Province. I am recounting here only the broad strokes of what took place. This was a huge step for an Institute founded in France, whose Founder and Foundress were French. It was full of emotion. The change in structure could not have happened without the openness and profound faith response of our sisters of the French Province and our sisters of the English-Irish Province, and, in particular, the leadership of both Provinces, Josepha O'Sullivan (EIP) and Marguerite-Marie Lyng (F). I expressed this in my letter to the Institute announcing the change in structure (see Appendix 1).

A special Finance Patrimony Commission was set up. Members of the commission were the French Vice-Provincial, Marguerite-Marie Lyng, the French Vice-Province Treasurer, Lucienne Dubois, the English-Irish Province Treasurer, Ellen O'Leary, and General Treasurer, Rosemary Lenahan. On occasion, the commission would meet with professional advisors of the French Vice-Province. Members of the French Vice-Province also met with members of the English-Irish Province Ongoing Formation Team and with an *ad-hoc* Care group to exchange ideas

on aging and the psychological, spiritual, and physical help needed in advancing in age. The English-Irish Province and French Vice-Province also named a person responsible for fostering communication. Of course, a big factor was studying each other's language and providing for translation of each other's information. The sisters of the English-Irish Province and French Vice-Province worked together on events during the Centenary Year of the death of Father Gailhac, 1989-1990, and on staffing the enlarged general council meeting that was held near Béziers in 1989.

## CONGREGATIONAL PLANNING

1986-1990

During the first weeks that Maria Lucia, Bernadette, and I were together in Rome in November 1985, we considered how we were going to go about implementing the general chapter mandate on Congregational Planning. The mandate was challenging:

That the general council initiate a congregational planning process that incorporates and coordinates planning in each of the provinces. Such a process will

- A) Cover all aspects of our life
- B) Utilize all the elements of a formal planning process
- C) Involve the participation of the Sisters (as well as those whom we serve and those with whom we work).

We strongly suggest that the general council engage professional help by selecting, after review, an

international group with expertise in planning, who can provide nationals in each of our provinces to work in the language of the sisters. This group should have experience working with religious congregations at the international level and be able to complete the work in a year.

We suggest that a sister be appointed in each province to act as liaison between this group and provincial government. She will monitor and facilitate the working relationships between the sisters and the group. Because a planning process implies change, she will assist the Provincial Council in preparing the sisters – intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually – for this process.

We suggest also that the Enlarged General Council advise the General Council on recommendations during and on completion of the process and that the General Council be responsible for implementation of the entire process. The process will include ongoing evaluation.

*General Chapter 1985*

Our first step in implementing this general chapter decision was to consult with people in Rome who had experience of congregational planning. Fortunately we were able to call upon very knowledgeable and experienced people to help us in our reflection: Sr. Helen McLaughlin, Superior General of the Society of the Sacred Heart (RSCJ), the RSCJ General Council, and Fr. Bill Hogan, CSC, who had spoken to members of the enlarged general council about congregational planning at its meeting in Béziers in 1979. They were extremely helpful. At the conclusion of the

General Chapter 1985, Colette Mahoney (EAP) had given me a proposal from the international firm of Coopers & Lybrand (C&L) for elements of a formal planning process. Reflecting on the information we had gathered and studying this proposal, we decided to contact Coopers & Lybrand in New York to discuss the possibility of the firm's working with us.

I spoke with Dr. Franck de Chambeau at Coopers & Lybrand and arranged for him to meet with Maria Lúcia, Bernadette, and me in January 1986, when we were in London for the English-Irish Province consultation. We met with Dr. de Chambeau and Mr. John Frank for the first time at the Provincial Center of the English-Irish Province in Ealing, England.

The fact that the general chapter mandate called for the planning to cover all aspects of our life and to involve the participation of the sisters led to an exciting adventure for us at general level and for the entire Institute. Little did we know then where it would lead and the surprises that would await us.

The first letter that Maria Lúcia Brandão, Bernadette McNamara and I sent to the Institute was written from London on January 16, 1986. In it we spoke of engaging the consultative services of Coopers & Lybrand to assist us in the planning process. It was followed-up by our letter for the February 24, 1986 in which we shared information about the approach and the plan of implementation of the general chapter mandate on Congregational Planning.

#### *February-March 1986 – Self-Study Questionnaire*

Dr. de Chambeau advised us that, as a first step, we would need an Institute-wide Self-Study. The Self-Study Questionnaire would

need to be analyzed objectively to determine what was healthy and what was unhealthy in the Institute. We knew that the Self-Study would involve an enormous amount of time and energy. We knew, too, that the fee for the services of Coopers & Lybrand would be considerable and that paying for the Self-Study would present a challenge, as the general level had no financial resources other than the annual assessments from the provinces/region for the yearly Operating Budget. Yet Maria Lúcia, Bernadette, and I felt it was essential that we undertake the Self-Study and have an objective analysis of the Institute. The Study, we believed, could help us to understand the reality of the Institute and the issues which would have the greatest impact.

In February and March 1986, with the guidance of Coopers & Lybrand, we designed the Self-Study. The breadth and scope of the General Chapter 1985 mandate for Congregational Planning necessitated a Self-Study questionnaire that would examine all aspects of our life (mission, ministry, shared values, structures, formation, government, finances, community, etc.) and involve the participation of the sisters. It was a herculean task to design. It seemed Maria Lúcia, Bernadette, Catherine Dolan, Rosemary Lenehan, Judith Lupo, and I met endlessly.

In and through it all, we were in contact with Coopers & Lybrand in New York. Translating it with exactly the right meaning in French, Portuguese, and English was challenging and spacing each of the 51 pages of the questionnaire to correspond with each other in three languages was monumental. This was necessary in order to tabulate the responses. To this day I can hear Maria do Rosário Durães (P) and Judith Lupo (B) searching for the right word in Portuguese that would have the same meaning for

both the Brazilian and Portuguese Provinces. There are no words that could describe adequately the dedication and skill of Rosário for making sure that the translations were faithful and that the spacing was the same in three languages on each of the 51 pages.

In March 1986, we planned with provincials/regional and provincial/regional staffs for as many sisters as possible to complete the Self-Study Questionnaire. The cooperation and creativity throughout the Institute was tremendous. In war-torn Mozambique, Jesuit missionaries took the questionnaire from Maputo to our sisters in remote and dangerous areas, and, on their return, the same missionaries would pick up the completed questionnaires and carry them back to the Jesuit Regional House in Maputo. Some provinces hosted gatherings to help sisters who had difficulty in completing the questionnaire. Individual sisters read to our blind and infirmed sisters and helped them to complete each of the 51 pages of the questionnaire. The result was amazing. When completed, 92% of the Institute completed the Self-Study Questionnaire. 1190 questionnaires were usable. Never, ever had Coopers & Lybrand had such a high level of response from any group with whom they had worked.

We asked provincial and regional levels to provide us with current information about membership, age groups, finances, etc., and to make projections for the next 17 years – to 2003. This was a huge challenge, as we had not been accustomed to doing it. In some places, there was resistance to make projections to 2003. Nonetheless, despite the difficulties, we were able to get projections from the provinces and region.

With all this information, Coopers & Lybrand then did an analysis of the collated responses for the total Institute and a



separate analysis for each province and the region. Coopers & Lybrand presented the Analysis of the Institute Self-Study in English and in Portuguese during the enlarged general council meeting in Belo Horizonte, Brazil in August 1986. After the enlarged general council meeting, a representative of Coopers & Lybrand, either Franck de Chambeau (English), Evandro Braz (Portuguese), or Jean Terren (French), went to each province to meet with the respective provincial council, and either Maria Lúcia, Bernadette, or I were present in order to hear and to understand the analysis of each province. Because civil war raged in Mozambique, the analysis of the Region of Mozambique was presented to the Regional, Sr. Palmira dos Anjos Azevedo (M), in Portugal.

I remember the excitement I felt as members of the enlarged general council, translators and secretarial staff, Franck de Chambeau (C&L, New York) and Evandro Braz (C&L, Brazil) were arriving for the enlarged general council meeting in Belo Horizonte.

*August 1986 – Coopers & Lybrand Analysis of Self-Study*

During the first days of the meeting, Franck de Chambeau and Evandro Braz reported on the C&L Analysis of the Self-Study. Clearly the Institute was very healthy in some areas – government especially – but there were signs of concern in others. Chief among the causes of concern was in the area of Mission. C&L said we were not dysfunctional, but soon could become dysfunctional with no clear direction for mission. I can still hear Dr. de Chambeau reporting that in some instances our responses did not match what we said about ourselves in our Constitutions and Chapter documents. We speak of ourselves as “One Body for Mission,” but

the Institute is decentralized. He went on to say that the responses revealed that we all “think Institute” and a large number of us “feel Institute,” but that it would be very difficult “to act Institute.”

Dr. de Chambeau continued to say that according to the Coopers & Lybrand Analysis, the RSHM are so different that, in the future, it may not be possible to go from one province to another. It will be a great challenge to coordinate and eventually integrate Institute planning with province planning. He went on to explain that there is a certain ambiguity regarding the understanding of the mission of the Institute and some tension between traditional ministries and the commitment to justice and solidarity with the poor. There is a lack of clear preference for specific types of ministry which would indicate a future direction. The Self-Study also revealed the financial imbalance caused by a large number of sisters working in non-remunerative ministries, and the lack of an investment plan which could help us to meet expenses without creating difficulties and tensions for the future.

The vast majority of sisters responded that they were happy where they were and satisfied with what they were doing. Coopers & Lybrand interpreted this as sisters being difficult to move, both geographically and attitudinally. I remember feeling numb. Upon hearing all this and reflecting together, the enlarged general council set goals for the next step of the planning process:

- To impart a sense of our future direction in mission
- To formulate a plan of formation for the Institute
- To elaborate a financial plan that could maintain our mission.

The enlarged general council recommended that a process of corporate reflection throughout the Institute take place in order to help us clarify a direction for Mission.

*Planning Liaison Persons Meeting I: Designing the Corporate Reflection Process*

In keeping with the direction given by the General Chapter 1985, in April 1986, a sister had been appointed in each province/region to act as liaison with the general level and provincial/regional level. We called that person the Planning Liaison Person.

Now, with the task of developing an Institute-wide Corporate Reflection Process that would help to clarify our direction in Mission, the group of Planning Liaison Persons came together for the first time February 5-15, 1987 at the Generalate. This wonderful group of highly motivated sisters was: Maria José Teixeira (B), Carol Schommer (EAP), Marianne Murray (EIP), Marie Dominique Treacy (F), Maria Celina dos Reis (P), Catherine Garcia (WAP), and Palmira Azevedo (M).

We had asked two persons with a wealth of experience and knowledge to help us with the corporate reflection process: Dr. Jean Alvarez and Sr. Nancy Conway, CSJ. Their guidance, facilitation skills, and sensitivity to cultures were invaluable. They helped us to understand that a mission statement could serve to make the Constitutions more focused for a particular period in history, could help us to see where we want to go as Institute, could help us to work together in moving in the direction in which we want to go, and could help all our provinces and region to integrate a common vision.

The meeting of the Province Planning Persons in February 1987 focused on designing the corporate reflection process. We all tried as best we could to deal with the tension among us. It was palpable. Where would this lead? How would we reconcile what provinces and the region were already doing / planning to do with this corporate reflection process? There were many unanswered questions. It was not an easy meeting.

The role of the Planning Liaison Persons was extremely important. Not only did they work together to design the Corporate Reflection Process, but they were helping us all to harmonize the various cultural approaches and work out our differences. They also had a very significant role in their respective provinces/region with the planning process.

*March 1987 – April 1988 Corporate Reflection Process – First Round*

The entire Institute participated in the Corporate Reflection Process from March 1, 1987-April 30, 1988. As we began the Corporate Reflection Process in May 1987, the general council appointed Sr. Catherine Dolan the Coordinator of Planning. She had been General Secretary for the previous seven years – the five-year term of Sr. Mary Milligan and her Council and two years with Maria Lúcia, Bernadette, and me. We all knew Catherine's tremendous gifts of organization, clarity of thought and expression. What a gift she was! She directed the planning process, collaborated with the general council and Province Planning Persons, and communicated with the provinces/region.

When Catherine's term as General Secretary concluded in September 1987, Sr. Mary Alice Young (EAP) assumed the responsibilities of General Secretary. It was a very full time at the

General Level, and Mary Alice took on the role of General Secretary with marvelous enthusiasm and great energy. We greatly appreciated the gifts that she brought to the General Team.

The Institute was in the midst of the Corporate Reflection Process when Catherine Dolan (EIP) took on the role of Planning Coordinator. The Process involved an enormous amount of translation, collation and organization of the responses. The first round of reflection and responses was in: Area 1 – Restating our Identity, and Area 2 – Mission Clarification. A synthesis was made of the response sheets from the provinces and region and was structured according to the seven elements which Sr. Nancy Conway and Dr. Jean Alvarez identified as generally found in mission statements: 1) the reason the group exists; 2) the roots from which it comes; 3) distinctive characteristics of the group; 4) people to be served by the group; 5) the qualities of service the group intends to offer; 6) the future direction of the group; 7) key words which are rich in meaning for the group (cf. Jean Alvarez, Ed.D. "Focusing a Congregation's Future," *Human Development*, Winter 1984). In May 1988, the synthesis of these seven elements was sent out to the Institute.

*May 1988 – Planning Liaison Persons II: Drafted Mission Statement*

With these responses, we knew the level of agreement that there was in Restating Identity and Mission Clarification. At this point, we called upon Sr. Margaret Fielding (EIP) to write a draft of the Mission Statement using the synthesis. Margaret, gifted writer that she is, brought together the common elements and wrote the first draft of the mission statement during the second meeting of the Planning Liaison Persons, May 18-26, 1988. Sr. Marina Queiroz (B) was at this meeting from the Brazilian Province. I remember how

pleased we were at the first reading of the mission statement draft. This draft was then brought to the enlarged general council at its meeting in Los Angeles in July 1988.

*September/October 1988 – Corporate Reflection Process – Second Round*

Following the enlarged general council meeting, the draft of the mission statement was sent out. Sisters were asked if it is authentic to who we are, if it is faithful, will it provide a future direction, and is anything lacking. Margaret Fielding then received these collated responses and revised the mission statement draft.

*February 24, 1989 – Revised Draft of Mission Statement sent to Sisters*

Catherine Dolan sent out two papers to the Institute to clarify where we were in the process: 'Clarification of Some Aspects of Mission Statement' and 'Institute Feedback on Mission Statement.' The general council letter for the February 24, 1989 focused on some aspects of the revised mission statement and asked sisters if they could accept or not accept the revised draft of the mission statement.

There were less than twenty sisters who said they had difficulties, questions and concerns about the mission statement, but they were articulate and their responses were well thought out. A principal area of concern by those who had difficulties and questions regarded the interpretation of the text and possible differences of interpretation; the apparent contradiction in affirming our mission to *all*, while giving a specific focus to *some*, "those most in need of justice". Another area of concern was the

difficulty in accepting the mission statement without knowing the implications.

*April 1989 – Institute Criteria for Ministry*

In April 1989, the Institute Criteria for Ministry was sent out. These criteria helped us to understand / envision how the words of the mission statement might be applied concretely to one area of our lives – to choosing and evaluating ministries.

Maria Lúcia, Bernadette, and I wrote to the Institute on April 8, 1989 and took the opportunity to respond to the difficulties and concerns some sisters expressed with the revised mission statement, thinking possibly some of these same feelings were shared by others as well. We wrote that it may become necessary for each province, vice-province, region to name “the powerless, the deprived, the marginalized, the voiceless” within their own particular situation. We would need to work together, at all levels, to deepen our understanding of how the general mission to *all* and the specific focus of *those most in need of justice* are related to one another.

*July 1989 – Enlarged General Council ratifies Mission Statement*

At the enlarged general council near Béziers in July 1989, we, as General Council, gave a report on the status of the mission statement. At that meeting, the enlarged general council ratified the Mission Statement. The year before the General Chapter 1990, we communicated to the Institute that the enlarged general council had ratified the Mission Statement. We sent the revised draft and rationale to the Institute and asked sisters to affirm or not affirm the Mission Statement before it would be considered for approval at the general chapter. We explained that it is the culmination of a

process which involved the whole Institute and it is a direction for the next 10-15 years. 97% of sisters indicated approval for the Mission Statement. It would eventually be handed over to the General Chapter 1990 for approval.

During this same period, 1987-1990, Task Force Committees were formed to deal with specific issues. We had a Task Force on Sharing Resources and a Task Force on Initial Formation that were extremely important in helping us to act as Institute.

As with the development of the Mission Statement, we continued to experience challenges in the planning process. Each province and the region were at a different point and had a different style and cultural approach. The needs of the Institute were not always those of an individual province or region. We needed to achieve a delicate balance between “top-down” and “bottom-up” movements in planning.

### **INTER-AFRICA ASSEMBLY**

January 1987

Sr. Maria Leonor Fernandes (M), former general councillor from the Portuguese Province, had been a member of the Region of Mozambique since leaving Rome in 1975. Sr. Mary Milligan appointed her the first Inter-Africa Coordinator in 1981, and Maria Leonor played a very significant role in initiating greater communication among our sisters in Mozambique, Mali, Zambia, and Zimbabwe (see Appendix 2). She was the catalyst for the first Inter-Africa Assembly and, in January 1987, Maria Leonor’s dream of an Inter-Africa Assembly was realized at Chishiwasha Seminary,



Harare. Our sisters in Zimbabwe were marvelous hosts for the Assembly.

A few days before Christmas 1986, Sr. Maria do Rosario Durães (P), translator on the Generalate Staff, and I left Rome to attend the Inter-Africa Assembly that was to take place in Zimbabwe. We spent several days in Mozambique before the Assembly opened. This was my first trip to Africa, and I felt inadequate on many levels, especially in my ability to communicate with our sisters in Mozambique. I had studied Portuguese for four weeks in Lisbon in May 1986, but my language skills in Portuguese were very limited. Fortunately, Rosario helped me with translation.

We had an eight hour stopover in Johannesburg *en route* to Maputo, and even during those eight hours at the airport, we experienced the strong, oppressive system of apartheid in South Africa. I remember our arrival in Maputo and the drive from the Maputo Airport to the Regional House. It was just before Christmas, and there was a stark contrast between the pre-Christmas atmosphere we had left in Rome and the streets of Maputo. The city was without lights. Mozambique, a Marxist country, was in the midst of civil war. Our sisters in Maputo were extraordinarily gracious. Christmas Eve was memorable, and I felt the joy and hope that Christ's birth is to suffering humanity, as I never had before.

From Maputo, Rosario and I went to Harare. Zimbabwe was beautiful, with flowers everywhere and colorful bougainvillea outside the house of our sisters in Mabelreign. Soon we were taken to the Major Seminary in Chishawasha, the venue for our Assembly. It was wonderful to see our sisters in Zimbabwe, those

from Mali and Zambia, and to see again our sisters from Mozambique. I was delighted, too, to see Srs. Josepha O'Sullivan, Provincial of our English-Irish Province, and Ilda Saavedra, Provincial of our Portuguese Province.

During our gathering, there was the opportunity for all of us to have a better understanding of each foundation in Africa and its history, to build relationships, and to resolve to improve communication and collaboration. We also spent time discussing the role of the Inter-Africa Coordinator, evaluating the structure, and articulating how we could see this role growing in the future. Suggestions were made as to who might replace Maria Leonor, when her second three-year term ended later that year. Based on the consultation with sisters at this Assembly, the role of the Inter-Africa Coordinator was strengthened, and Sr. Veronica Brand (EAP: Zimbabwe) was appointed Inter-Africa Coordinator to succeed Sr. Maria Leonor.

During the Inter-Africa Assembly there was a call from our Mozambican sisters "not to leave us alone in Africa." They saw the relevance of our charism and our motto "that all may have life" to the African culture which places such a high value on life. They hoped that we would receive vocations from other parts of Africa. The Inter-Africa Assembly provided an opportunity for sisters from Zambia and Zimbabwe to meet to discuss collaborative efforts in the area of vocation awareness. This was the beginning of a journey that would lead in a few years to the establishment of a novitiate for Zambia and Zimbabwe.

My memory of this Inter-Africa Assembly remains vivid to this day. I can still see all those who were present and remember feeling that our sisters in Africa had been living the promise of

Jesus in sending out the first disciples to proclaim the Gospel to every creature. "These signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will drive out demons, they will speak new languages. They will pick up serpents with their hands, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not harm them. They will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover" (Mark 16: 17-18). The first Inter-Africa Assembly was a graced moment for our sisters in Africa and for our entire Institute.

### **INTER-AFRICA COORDINATOR**

The Inter-Africa Coordinator was an intermediary structure created in 1981. Sr. Maria Leonor Fernandes (M), the first Inter-Africa Coordinator, served two three year terms until 1987. The aim of the Inter-Africa Coordinator was to promote greater awareness of the Institute among sisters in Africa and greater awareness of Africa among sisters in the Institute. The Inter-Africa Coordinator related to our sisters in Mozambique, Mali, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, the provincials who have sisters in Africa, and to the general level.

Sr. Veronica Brand (EAP: Zimbabwe) served two three-year terms as Inter-Africa Coordinator from 1987-1993. Her visits to each of the four countries helped to strengthen the unity of our mission in Africa, communication with general council, provincial levels and between countries in Africa, collaboration between countries, particularly the areas of vocation awareness and formation, and the incarnation and growth of our charism in Africa. The Inter-Africa Coordinator met annually with the general council and participated in meetings of the enlarged general

council. Maria Leonor and Veronica kept before us always the needs and challenges of the Institute in Africa.

### SHARING RESOURCES

The General Chapter 1985 called for Commitment to and Education for Justice. As means to do this, the General Chapter 1985 called for the following Action Steps:

- That the Institute develop investment policies to ensure that we are not collaborating with systems which promote injustice.
- That the Institute establish priorities for the distribution and use of our resources (persons and material goods) keeping in mind that “all are called to serve from the perspective of the poor.” (RSHM Constitutions 18-21 i)

The General Chapter 1985 also called us: “to share our resources across province lines in order to respond to Institute-wide priorities in mission” and called us to greater solidarity with the larger, world community and approved the following mandate: “That the Solidarity Fund be maintained and developed by the Institute as a whole.” (General Chapter 1985 Document)

The General Chapter 1985 had recognized the declining number of sisters in the Institute, the rising age level, and limited income. This realization was a significant factor in the general chapter mandates of Sharing of Resources and Congregational Planning.

The Self-Study helped us to see that though there was a clear mandate from the General Chapter 1985 to share resources,

the reality reflected in the Institute Self-Study showed that it would be difficult to do this with the divisionalized structure of the Institute. We speak of being “One Body for Mission,” but in 1986 we were highly decentralized. At general level we did not have particular structures in place to know the real financial condition of the Institute. The Coopers & Lybrand Analysis of the Self-Study concluded that every province has its own way of recording its finances and the total cost of certain expenses – certain ministries, for example. We needed a common method of accounting in the Institute. Also, there was need to maintain a balance of remunerative and non-remunerative ministries and for each province to find ways to create new sources of income and productive ways of investing its patrimony.

Sr. Rosemary Lenehan (EIP), who became General Treasurer in February 1986, took on the responsibilities of this role with great energy. Right away she made a commitment to study Italian. She would be at meetings in the morning, and then after our mid-day meal, would leave for Italian class. Within a short time Rosemary was speaking Italian and attending meetings of general treasurers in Rome. She was also committed to our local parish, San Luigi, and became a member of the Parish Council. She visited the provinces and region and got to know the financial situation of each first-hand.

Early in our term, Maria Lúcia, Bernadette, and I faced the challenge of how to pay for the Congregational Planning Process. There were no funds at the general level to pay for bringing in consultants to help us with implementing this mandate. Historically, resources were in provinces – financial, and the greatest resources of all, our sisters. The general level had sufficient

monies to meet the expenses of the annual operating budget, but no more. Revenue for the operating budget came from annual province assessments.

Implementing an Institute-wide process of Congregational Planning required professional help. We presented to the enlarged general council, at its meeting in August 1986, several models for meeting the expenses of planning, but no model presented was acceptable to the provincials/regional. Each one went back to her council and was to suggest to the general council a method to pay Coopers & Lybrand for the initial Self-Study and Analysis and for the report to the enlarged general council and to each province/region. In the end, we decided to borrow from the Beatification Fund (at General Level) to make the payment, and provinces committed to repay what had been borrowed from the Fund. In June 1988 almost all the provinces had made their payment. Once Congregational Planning was underway, future expenses were paid through the General Level Operating Budget.

In July 1987, the enlarged general council considered creating an *ad hoc* Task Force on Sharing Resources to help us respond to the financial challenges we faced. It was not an easy decision. The Corporate Reflection Process to set a direction for mission was already underway and a plan of total formation was called for by the General Chapter 1985. Some provinces felt keenly the lack of a general plan of Formation at Institute-level and felt that this ought to be given priority. Then, too, calling together a Task Force would, of course, require human and financial resources.

Yet, we at general level recognized the great need we had for addressing financial concerns, and we knew that there were

sisters in the provinces with very considerable knowledge and experience who could help us. It was against this background that the *ad hoc* Task Force on Sharing Resources was formed in late 1987 to help the general council respond to the mandates of the General Chapter 1985 in the areas of “Internationality and Sharing Resources” and “Commitment to and Education to Justice.”

### *Sharing Resources Task Force*

Sr. Rosemary Lenahan, General Treasurer, had the major role in the Task Force on “Sharing Resources.” The sisters who came together brought with them a wealth of knowledge and experience in managing the finances of our provinces/region. This hard-working group of sisters consisted of Angela Machado (B), Michelle Murphy (EAP), Ellen O’Leary (EIP), Lucienne Dubois (F), Ilda Saavedra (P), Joyce Mahar (WAP), Maria da Felicidade Daniel (M), and Rosemary Lenahan, General Treasurer.

During their first meeting in Rome in April/May 1988, they designed a common Institute financial reporting system as a first step in getting and understanding the total picture of our financial resources. Elaborating a common financial reporting system for every province and region was a huge task, but it was an essential step if we were to get to know better the financial reality and challenges of each part of the Institute and to see each part in relation to the whole.

The Task Force met again in April 1989. Benvinda Teixeira (M) was at this second meeting from the Region of Mozambique. The group reviewed and refined the reporting system which by this time had already been used by the provincial/regional treasurers. The Task Force also reviewed the Institute Financial

Policies that we had in place and made recommendations to the general council for a plan of action for greater sharing of financial resources. This included the creation of the Programme Endowment Fund, which was to be supported by a province's contribution of 5% from the sale of property. The formula for the Annual Contribution to the General Level was also examined.

We had provinces both large and small, those with few institutions and those with many, some with significant assets and others with few. It could be delicate to come up with a formula that was fair to everyone and, at the same time, could provide the General Level with the annual income to meet its budget. The Task Force examined two other items included in the 1985 general chapter mandates: investment policies and Solidarity Fund criteria.

### *Recommendations*

The Task Force made five recommendations: Financial Reporting System, Annual Contribution to the General Level, Institute Solidarity Fund, Programme Endowment Fund, Investment Policies. These recommendations were presented to the enlarged general council at its meeting in Mont Rouge, France, in July 1989. After considering the support that the members of the enlarged general council gave to the recommendations, we, as General Council, approved all five of them.

In looking back to the work of this Task Force, I can appreciate to this day the enormous challenge that lay ahead of us at that time to share resources across provinces/region and to act as Institute. Each province and region was aware of its reality, but we did not know much, if anything at all, of the financial situation of the other parts of the Institute. It was necessary that we expand our



vision and increase our knowledge. It called for a growth in transparency, a growth in trust. This would happen over the following years. We would grow in our ability to trust one another with financial data of our respective provinces/region. We also would grow considerably in our ability to share financial resources across province lines. This was huge, and it was greatly needed in the years that followed.

## MOZAMBIQUE

1985-1990

Civil war was raging when I first visited Mozambique with Rosario in December 1986 prior to the Inter-Africa Assembly. The president, Samora Machel, had been killed two months earlier in a tragic airplane crash. Joaquim Chissano was the new President. Food, water, medicine, and electricity were at a premium, if they existed at all. Travel and communication were very limited. In 1985 we had 29 sisters, Mozambican and Portuguese, in the Region of Mozambique. Sr. Palmira Azevedo (M) was Regional.

Because of guerilla activity in the countryside, we temporarily withdrew from Pebane in 1987 and from Gurué in 1988. We hoped that when the war was over we would be able to go back to places such as these that were very important to the Region.

During this difficult time, there were young women who were expressing an interest in entering the Institute. The novitiate program had been suspended because of the war, but in late 1987/early-1988 the Region of Mozambique made a request to reopen the novitiate. With famine, disease, and much death in Mozambique,

this was a strong affirmation of life. We, as General Council, agreed to the reopening of the novitiate. Olga Georgina (M) was appointed Formation Directress. Olga had studied at Regina Mundi and at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, and after receiving a Masters of Arts Degree in Religious Sciences from the Gregorian University, she returned to Mozambique in 1987. In October 1988, Bernadette McNamara and I made the General Council's formal visit to the Region of Mozambique. We had the great joy of being present in Maputo when Albertina Páscoa José, Valéria Erneio, and Fátima Fernando were welcomed into the Pre-Novitiate.

During that visit, Bernadette and I initiated the consultation for a new regional. Somewhat miraculously, members of the Region managed to gather in Quelimane for the consultation. As we met, bombs could be heard in the background, but we were happy and grateful to be together. The reflection and sharing during the Assembly indicated that it was the moment in the history of the Region for a Mozambican to be regional. The consultation process led to the appointment of Sr. Ana Mó Senguaio as Regional of Mozambique, beginning in early 1989.

When Mozambique gained independence in 1975, all property of the Institute was nationalized. By the late 1980s, the government had begun a dialogue with original owners, the Church, religious congregations, about the possibility of confiscated property – buildings and houses – being returned to the original owners. The Novitiate reopened on July 31, 1989 with three novices: Fátima, Páscoa, Valéria. The house the Region had in Sagrada Família Parish, Quelimane, was established as the Novitiate House. In the years that followed, other young women expressed their desire to enter the Institute. This presented the

challenge of needing a novitiate house adequate for receiving a growing number of novices.

Meanwhile, in the neighboring countries of Zambia and Zimbabwe our sisters were very interested in vocation awareness, and they wanted help from our Mozambican sisters. Ana Mό Senguaio was ready to help, and she visited Zimbabwe in December 1989.

### INITIAL FORMATION

There had been great interest in initial formation, since the General Chapter 1985. This was further increased by the reopening of the Novitiate in Mozambique and the work of the Vocations Committees in Zambia and Zimbabwe since the Inter-Africa Assembly in 1987. There was great need to ensure that there would be strong formation to the Institute, along with the very fine inter-congregational formation programs that were taking place in various countries. There was, as well, need for an evaluation and possible revision of the Initial Formation Guidelines.

It had proven difficult to call together a group of sisters to evaluate and revise the Initial Formation Guidelines until December 1988. We felt that it was very important to have the Corporate Reflection Process to clarify our Mission well underway before we called together a group of formators. The direction of Mission would impact the formation of newer members.

#### *Initial Formation Task Force*

From December 28, 1988-January 5, 1989 a group of sisters with experience in initial formation were called together to evaluate and

revise the existing Institute Initial Formation Guidelines (1981). We met at Marymount International School, Rome, during the Christmas break. Members of this Task Force were: Maria de Lourdes Arantes, Terezinha Cecchin (B); Anne Walsh (EAP); Margaret Fielding, Anne Wells (EIP); Françoise Wyckaert (F); Maria Teresa Bastião, Olga Georgina (M); Maria Antónia Quinteiro Lopes, Maria Fernanda Neto, Maria Emília Peliz (P); Maria Coronel, Virginia Garza (WAP). Catherine Dolan generously agreed to facilitate the Initial Formation Task Force Meeting.

I remember the wealth of experience of this group. Here were thirteen of our sisters, all involved in some area of Initial Formation, working together toward a common vision. These sisters and provincials, vice-provincial, and regional, with formation directresses, had collaborated in the preparation of the meeting by sharing their experiences of initial formation over the preceding eight years and by identifying their needs in initial formation. In years prior to the Task Force Meeting, the provinces, vice-province, and region had invested much time and energy in developing initial formation programs, including encouraging each local community to be a community of welcome, setting up a house for young women interested in exploring the idea of a vocation to religious life, and helping to prepare new formators.

Annual formation reports to the general council had revealed direction in initial formation. Issues identified in 1988 which could cause real problems in initial formation for the Institute were:

- Lack of adequate peer group support
- Inculturation
- Understanding of community – today and future

- RSHM spirituality

The Task Force recognized the needs of formation in a rapidly changing world with different local realities. Mission is the unifying element, and the Mission Statement was seen as helping us to all be looking in the same direction. The Community will no longer carry the religious; it is the religious who must carry the Community into every experience, social setting, relationship and commitment.

The Task Force formulated new Guidelines for Initial Formation. These were meant to be normative throughout the Institute, the same for everyone, and translated into each culture. Specific action was agreed upon to develop and to strengthen programs in our provinces/vice-province/region on vocation awareness, with the need expressed to be able to link Vocation Awareness and Ongoing Formation.

Formators saw the international aspect of formation as essential and felt that there needed to be a structure for this to happen. Before making Final Vows, a sister needs to know what it means to belong to an international Institute and to have some peer group experience. A recommendation was made to the general council that an experience of internationality for newer members be included in the preparation before making Final Vows.

It is difficult to overestimate the importance of the Guidelines that were developed by this Task Force. We had young women in Initial Formation Programs within our Institute who were being formed in different cultures. The Coopers & Lybrand Analysis of the Self-Study 1986 revealed difficulties we would have with sisters going from their home province to a receiving

province. The challenge was to provide an initial formation program that would prepare someone to live religious life within our Institute and to have the freedom to respond to the needs of the Institute, wherever those needs may be. The Initial Formation Guidelines revised in 1989 helped to make this possible.

## **THE JOURNEY TO ESTABLISH A NOVITIATE FOR ZAMBIA AND ZIMBABWE**

1985-1990

At the Inter-Africa Assembly in 1987, there was a strong commitment to collaboration in Africa, particularly in the areas of vocation awareness and formation. Following the Assembly, the Vocations Committees of Zambia and Zimbabwe met on a regular basis, and we at general level were in dialogue with our sisters in Zambia and Zimbabwe about receiving young Zambian and Zimbabwean women who wanted to enter the Institute. This subject came up especially whenever Maria Lúcia, Bernadette, and I would meet with Veronica Brand, the Inter-Africa Coordinator from 1987-1993. It was a long and sustained journey with our sisters in Zambia and in Zimbabwe that led to the opening of a novitiate for both countries.

The situation in Zambia was sensitive, as years before we were asked specifically by Bishop James Corboy, SJ, Bishop of Monze, Zambia, not to accept local vocations into our international Institute in order to build up resources for the local Church in Zambia. In 1971, we were asked to help in the initial formation of a diocesan congregation. With great sacrifice and generosity, the sisters of the English-Irish Province responded to Bishop Corboy's

request, and our English-Irish Province helped in the formation, government, and formal canonical recognition of the Holy Spirit Sisters as a Diocesan Congregation. By 1987 the Holy Spirit Sisters were well established, and it was a new moment to raise the possibility of accepting local Zambian vocations into the Institute.

Fr. Bill Hogan, CSC, helped us at General Level, our sisters in Zambia and in Zimbabwe, and the Eastern American Province and English-Irish Province provincials to consider the creation of a novitiate for Zambia and Zimbabwe. He helped us especially to understand the responsibilities the Institute was taking upon itself and the canonical implications involved in receiving Zambian and Zimbabwean vocations.

After meeting together on a consistent basis for three years, the Vocation Committees of Zambia and Zimbabwe presented to their respective provincials, in April 1990, a proposal to establish a novitiate for Zambia and Zimbabwe. The novitiate would be the responsibility of a province, not the general level. There were questions, but as they say in Africa, paths are made by walking. The novitiate would be for the Eastern American and English-Irish Provinces, but one province would have juridical responsibility. The Eastern American Province and English-Irish Province agreed that the Eastern American Province would have the juridical responsibility for the novitiate, and the Eastern American Province and the English-Irish Province would be responsible for working out the details and providing resources, human and financial.

The Provincial Councils of both provinces approved the proposal that a novitiate be established for Zambia and Zimbabwe, and the two provincials, Sr. Patricia Lacy, of the Eastern American Province, and Sr. Josepha O'Sullivan, of the English-Irish Province,

submitted the proposal dated June 6, 1990 to the General Council. I have always felt it was providential that Josepha O'Sullivan and Patricia Lacy were the two provincials at the time. Josepha had spent years in Zambia, and Patricia Lacy had been in Zimbabwe the years prior to her becoming provincial. They knew the local situation, they knew the people and their history, and they knew the RSHM reality and our history in Africa. Both had been at the Inter-Africa Assembly in 1987. Our sisters in Zambia and Zimbabwe and Josepha and Patricia Lacy were women of great faith. The proposal to open a novitiate for Zambia and Zimbabwe was a leap in faith with full consciousness of our limitations.

The Eastern American Province and English-Irish Province proposal to establish a novitiate in Zambia and Zimbabwe was approved by the general council a few days before the opening of the General Chapter 1990.

## **ONGOING FORMATION**

1985-1990

The unity of the Institute was supremely important to our Founder, Father Gailhac. On a few occasions throughout our history that unity had been tested. Fortunately, in each age our roots have been very deep, and we have been able to withstand whatever challenges threatened unity. The members of the Institute have remained one in Body and in Spirit.

However, the 1986 Self-Study identified problems we could have in the future if, with our diversity of cultures and differences in provinces/vice-province/region, we were not deeply rooted in common values. In the first round of the Corporate



Reflection Process in 1987-1988, we were called upon to restate our identity as Institute. Coming together in prayer and reflection Institute-wide to articulate this was experienced by many as ongoing formation.

In 1988 there was some negative feeling that much was being done for those in initial formation who were working with very few and nothing comparable was being done in ongoing formation. We had not yet acted to implement the Action Steps of the General Chapter 1985:

- That means / processes be developed for a plan of total formation that will deepen our common vision through an interiorization of the Constitutions so that we may have the greatest possibility of realizing our mission as apostolic women religious in the reality of our world
- That ongoing formation, including all aspects of human and religious development, in the light of our mission, be a priority in the Institute and that guidelines for a plan/process be drawn up which each province will implement for all stages of development

*General Chapter 1985 Document*

In 1988, we at the general level felt that we were not yet able to have Institute Guidelines for Ongoing Formation until the direction of Mission was clear. Also, there was lack of time before the General Chapter 1990. Early in 1989, however, we asked Sr. Edmund Harvey (EAP) to collaborate with us in the area of ongoing formation. As a theologian and former general councillor, Edmund had a depth of knowledge and experience in ongoing

formation, knew the provinces, vice-province, and region well, and was passionate about the Institute.

We met with her on March 21, 1989 to discuss what her work would involve. Then from September-November 1989, Edmund was in communication with sisters responsible for ongoing formation in each province, the vice-province, and region, and she asked them what had taken place in their province/vice-province/region in ongoing formation since 1985. She also asked what needs they had experienced in ongoing formation and what structures were in place in their province/vice-province/region to carry out ongoing formation.

In the next two months Edmund integrated and analyzed the responses she received, and she prepared "The Report to the general council on ongoing formation in the Institute." Maria Lúcia, Bernadette, Rosemary, Mary Alice, and I met with Edmund at the Generalate from March 27-29, 1990. She summarized and gave an overview of what had been happening in ongoing formation, and she presented a very thorough and profound analysis of us, Institute-wide. Among the points raised at our meeting were:

- There seems to be two different understandings and ways of thinking of ongoing formation. One understanding, generally speaking, sees ongoing formation in terms of personal development, taking courses, participating in programs. The other understanding sees ongoing formation in terms of 'the body' at all levels – local, province, Institute – to be able to respond to needs of the Institute.

- There are different understandings of and approaches to community. Community becomes a challenge as there are fewer corporate ministries. Institutions have their own culture. As we become more deinstitutionalized, our identity will not be related to a specific institution and there will be greater need for formation as a group. The issue involves provincial community, local community, and those living apart from a local community.
- There should be a structure for ongoing formation in each province/vice-province/region which is visible, integrated, cohesive, with someone in the province/vice-province/region who is responsible for ongoing formation. A person gives visibility, prominence, importance to ongoing formation. She is an advocate.
- We need to look at contemporary issues of society, the future of religious life, the sociological dimension of community/religious life.

It became abundantly clear when we met in March 1989 that, at Institute level, we needed to call a group together to draw up Institute Ongoing Formation Guidelines that would give all of us common elements for our continuing formation. The purpose of that meeting would be to develop common Institute orientations in ongoing formation; to strengthen ways of collaboration among the provinces/vice-province/region; to examine structures in the area of ongoing formation; to understand differences among us, find common elements, and then work toward a common goal.

After considering Sr. Edmund Harvey's report, the recommendation from the Initial Formation Meeting in January

1989, and based on our experience of specific needs in the Institute today, we, as General Council, made a recommendation to the next general council that a group be called together, with a sister from each province/vice-province/region who is responsible for ongoing formation, to collaborate with the general council in the area of ongoing formation.

## **CENTENARY OF THE DEATH OF FATHER GAILHAC**

1989-1990

In 1987 we were already looking ahead to celebrating the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the death of our Founder, Father Gailhac, in 1990. We knew it would be very important to commemorate this special Anniversary Institute-wide to honour Gailhac's life and the gift that he was for the Church and people of his time and that he continues to be for our time too. It was to be a time to thank God for the Mission entrusted to the Institute and to renew our commitment to go forward in a spirit of faith and zeal to respond to the needs of our time. The 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Gailhac's death became a celebration of his life and legacy during the Centenary Year from July 1989 to July 1990. This was especially true on the actual 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of his death, January 25, 1990.

In October 1987, we called together a group to work with us on the celebration, Srs. Maria Helena Ayres (P), Margaret Fielding (EIP), Judith Lupo (B), and Genevieve Underwood (WAP). Margaret Fielding was Coordinator of the Institute Centenary Committee. The Committee met for the first time in Dublin in August 1988. Their second meeting was held in Rome, and Maria Lúcia, Bernadette, and I met with the group at certain moments of

their working together. From the time of being called together in 1987 until the culmination of the Centenary Year during the general chapter in July 1990, Margaret, Maria Helena, Judith, and Genevieve worked together tirelessly and with great generosity.

They invited provinces, the vice-province, and region to plan celebrations and coordinated these, invited sisters to compose music, write songs and poems, and design art work to celebrate this special Anniversary. They planned a Centenary publication geared to the public and asked province/vice-province/region secretaries for histories and asked communicators for photographs and slides of sisters in their ministries. Some sisters were asked to contribute to the narrative of this publication. Dolores Carroll (EIP) worked on historical data. Marguerite Greene (EIP) did research on "Woman." Margaret Fielding wrote the Introduction, Mary Milligan (WAP) wrote Gailhac's Charism, Catherine Dolan (EIP) wrote Present Reality, and the General Council wrote a message at the end of the publication. Genevieve Underwood designed the cover, "The RSHM Celebrate." It was a gigantic effort to collect photos, have Sisters write the description of each picture, and have it translated and printed in different languages.

The Institute Centenary Committee also prepared the official opening of the Centenary Year, which took place during the enlarged general council meeting in Béziers on July 23, 1989. As part of the opening of the Centenary Year, three former general superiors – Srs. Margarida Maria Gonçalves (P), Maria de Lourdes Machado (B), and Mary Milligan (WAP) – shared with the Institute by video. These videos are historical reminders of that special occasion.

Thanks to Bernadette McNamara and our sisters in France, Monsieur Henri Vidal, great-grandnephew of Father Gailhac, and Madame Bernard Couronne, widow of a great-grandnephew of Mère St. Jean, and their families were present at the Mass in the Chapel of the Motherhouse celebrating the opening of the Centenary Year. Several days after the Mass, the Vidals and Madame Couronne came to Mont Rouge, several miles outside of Béziers, where the enlarged general council meeting was being held. It was an unforgettable visit. Monsieur Vidal traced for us Gailhac's family tree up to 1989. Many of us thought that he even resembled Father Gailhac from pictures we had seen of him. Madame Maurice Vidal, widow of another great-grandnephew of Father Gailhac, also invited sisters from the enlarged general council meeting and from the Béziers communities for an evening at her house to meet the different generations of the family.

There was a lot of excitement during the Centenary Year. It coincided with preparations for the General Chapter 1990. When the Centenary Year opened during the enlarged general council meeting in July 1989, the enlarged general council had just received the latest draft of the Mission Statement and had ratified it. We had opportunities to be nourished by rich material that the Sources Committee had published in recent years through their research and accurate translations and to integrate what was happening in the Institute at that time with our Sources.

In anticipation of January 25, 1990, the actual 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the death of Father Gailhac, Maria Lúcia, Bernadette, and I thought it would be very special if all of us in Rome could have a private Mass with Pope John Paul II. With the help of Sr. John Bosco (EAP), the Institute Archivist, we devised a

plan whereby we could get our request into the hands of Mons. Stanislaw Dziwisz, Secretary to Pope John Paul II. The plan involved Maria Emília Yazbeck, Receptionist-Secretary at the Generalate and past pupil of the former RSHM school in Hillingdon Court, England, who is Polish by birth. She was to write the request in Polish and give it to Sr. John Bosco. John Bosco would then give the request to a Cardinal who lived in the apartment building of her mother at Via Mascherino, just outside the Vatican. The Cardinal would then see that it was handed directly to Mons. Stanislaw.

For days we knew that the request was in the hands of Mons. Stanislaw, and whenever the phone rang at the Generalate, a member of the community would say in a kidding way, "It's the Pope's Secretary." On the morning of January 23, 1990, the phone rang as Maria Lúcia, Bernadette, and I were meeting together. I answered it and heard Maria Emília say, "The Pope's Secretary is on the line." I thought this may have been a joke, but I waited, and then a man with a distinct accent came on the line, "This is Fr. Stanislaw. The Pope would like you to come to Mass tomorrow for your Founder's Anniversary." I remember asking, "Can we select the readings? Can we have music?" and I remember him saying, "Anything."

We quickly got the word out to our communities in Rome. Early in the morning of January 24<sup>th</sup>, all of us RSHM in Rome gathered at the Vatican to celebrate Mass with Pope John Paul II in his private chapel. It was the Feast of St. Francis de Sales, and we selected the Gospel passage of The Good Shepherd: John 10. During Communion we sang a hymn of Thanksgiving, "Graças, Eu

Te Dou Graças” by Maria do Céu Quinteiro Lopes (P), and at the end of Mass we sang the “Magnificat” in Italian.

After Mass, we all gathered to meet Pope John Paul II. He asked us questions about our Founder and the Institute. Early the following morning, January 25<sup>th</sup>, Pope John Paul II departed for Mali, and the start of a visit to five countries in Africa. That was why, Mons. Stanislaw explained Pope John Paul II could not celebrate Mass on our Founder’s actual Anniversary, January 25. It was a memorable experience for all of us in Rome, and I remember the strong feeling I had of being united with each and every one throughout the Institute.

The Centenary of the death of Father Gailhac and the celebrations that took place throughout the Institute during the Centenary Year created a new sensibility to expressing our roots publicly. It was a privileged time for us. So many important historical moments were converging with the Centenary Year: the Mission Statement, General Chapter 1990 preparations, and the new life of the Institute in Africa. Maria Lúcia Brandão, Bernadette, and I wrote to the Institute for the Centenary of Jean Gailhac’s death, January 25, 1990:

Today we are a reflection of the vision of Our Founder, who did not stop at boundaries and pre-established situations, but went everywhere his pilgrim spirit led him, without certainties, without securities, with only the firmness of his faith and the enthusiasm of his dreams!

The Centenary Year came to a close at a beautiful Eucharistic Liturgy during the General Chapter 1990. Those of us at the Chapter were joined by our sisters in Rome and friends of the



RSHM in thanking God for the blessings of the past year and in asking God's grace as we journeyed towards the year 2000.

## **GENERAL CHAPTER 1990**

At its meeting in Los Angeles in 1988, the enlarged general council agreed to keep the preparation for the General Chapter 1990 as simple as possible and to use existing structures as much as possible. Much of the work in the Corporate Reflection Process and in developing the Mission Statement was considered preparation for the general chapter. The General Chapter 1990 would be an opportunity to affirm and deepen our understanding of all that had been done and to build on the participation of the last three years.

The preparations for the general chapter focused on the Mission Statement and where it would lead us on our journey into the future. In the Chapter preparation process, the Institute responded to what had been achieved in the previous five years, since the General Chapter 1985. The greatest level of responses were: planning and collaborative effort in building the future, the Mission Statement, a renewed sense of identity, the Centenary celebration, a rediscovery of our charism, and the consultation process for the appointment of provincial/vice-provincial/regional.

The theme of the general chapter was "Carrying Forward Our Mission Statement." It was to be a moment to look at the implications of living the Mission Statement in all areas of our life. The enlarged general council which met in Béziers in the summer of 1989 had ratified the Mission Statement, and now it was to be considered by the general chapter. Dr. Jean Alvarez and Sr. Nancy Conway, CSJ, who had been working with the general council

since 1987, helped us in the Chapter preparation and facilitated the general chapter. They were greatly appreciated for their capacity to listen to the group and their cross-cultural sensitivity and experience. They knew and understood us.

In January 1990, we continued with preparations for the general chapter. At one of our sessions in planning the General Chapter 1990, Maria Lúcia, Bernadette, Rosemary, Mary Alice, Catherine Dolan, and I were considering who we ought to invite as a speaker to help us with our reflection and deliberations at the Chapter. We were sitting around the table in the Generalate library, and I remember saying, “We need to do something crazy, like inviting Fr. Kolvenbach [Superior General of the Society of Jesus].” Catherine Dolan said instantly, “Do it.” Knowing we had nothing to lose, I sat down and hand-wrote a letter to Fr. Kolvenbach inviting him to speak at our general chapter. Within a few days, I received a hand-written response from the Jesuit Curia, and it read, “I would be happy to come to speak to your Chapter, if my schedule permits.” It was signed Hans Kolvenbach, SJ.

The Statistical Report presented to the General Chapter 1990 by the General Secretary, Sr. Mary Alice Young, indicated that the number in the Institute was decreasing. As of December 31, 1989, we were 1242 members, of which 20 were in First Vows, in five provinces, one vice-province, one region, and the general level, with the following membership:

Brazilian Province:	165
Eastern American Province:	302
English-Irish Province:	193
Portuguese Province:	412
Western American Province:	104

French Vice-Province:	38
Region of Mozambique:	23
General Level:	5

As the general chapter began, I was excited about the prospects of Institute approval of the Mission Statement, but I was very aware that there were possible minefields in the days to come. In preparing the Chapter, I remember Jean and Nancy saying we will want to ritualize the vote on the Mission Statement. I prayed that, whatever the outcome, we would all be together in mind and heart when the voting was over.

Early in the Chapter, Mary Milligan led a beautiful morning of prayer and reflection. It was a wonderful presentation and a perfect way to begin.

Fr. Kolvenbach spoke to us early in the Chapter, before the Chapter members considered the approval of the Mission Statement. His talk touched on some of the sensitive points that had been raised by some of our sisters who had difficulty with the Mission Statement. How could all of our 'works,' diverse as they were, be about the promotion of justice? Fr. Kolvenbach shared with us how the Society of Jesus can see things from the same starting point despite tremendous diversities in ministries, geography, etc. He said that the whole question of faith and justice revolves around three expressions: 1) the preferential love for the poor; 2) the option for the poor; 3) the promotion of justice.

'Preferential love for the poor' means we are sharing the preferential love of Christ for the poor. It is a matter of the heart. The promotion of justice means not only to be good to the poor, but to fight against the unjust structures that have made these poor, victims. Language is very inexact, Fr. Kolvenbach said, and in our

discussions, we should consider as poor only the socio-economically poor. What is important is integration of the option, the preferential love for the poor, in any kind of work we are doing.

A Question and Answer session followed his talk. This time was very important. He was very credible to members of the Chapter, diverse as we were, and we benefitted greatly from his insights and experience in leading the Society of Jesus. Someone expressed it perfectly when she said his presentation and the Questions and Answers which followed were “Manna from heaven.”

When the day came to vote on the Mission Statement, the chairs in the meeting room were placed in a circle. We had the Mission Statement on a special piece of paper, and it was passed from Chapter member to Chapter member. Holding the Mission Statement, each delegate expressed her vote – “Yes, No, or Abstain.” I remember watching the Mission Statement being handed to Rosa do Carmo Sampaio, of the Portuguese Province. I did not know how she felt about the Mission Statement. She had great knowledge of our Sources and was highly respected. Rosa began to speak, and I held my breath. She spoke of Father Gailhac’s and Mère St. Jean’s love of the poor and how the Mission Statement is faithful to our tradition, and then she said, “I accept.” Her acceptance was very significant. Then, we continued, one delegate at a time. When we finished, the vote was unanimous to approve the Mission Statement.

It was a tremendous moment, and I felt the power of the Holy Spirit active among us. I had had that same feeling at the General Chapter 1980. Then, after years of working on the

rewriting of our Constitutions and going over every paragraph word by word, we faced courageously our differences at the Chapter, tried to deal with these, and the general chapter approved our Constitutions unanimously.

The second main goal of the General Chapter 1990 was to elect the general superior and the general council. In preparing for the general chapter with Dr. Jean Alvarez and Sr. Nancy Conway, CSJ, the Chapter facilitators, Maria Lúcia, Bernadette, Rosemary, Mary Alice, and I had reviewed and supported the election process to be presented to the Chapter for its approval. At the Chapter, it had been approved. The election of the general superior took place, and I was elected for a second five-year term. We then moved to consideration of the election of the two general councillors. This proved to be very difficult, and we experienced some very tense days. More time was needed for those in discernment about leaving their name in consideration for election. Those nominated were speaking to Jean Alvarez and/or Nancy Conway about their personal discernment, and Jean and Nancy were meeting with those nominated as a group. Meanwhile, I did not know what was going on with those who were nominated. It was a very difficult time for me personally, and never will I ever forget the enormous support of Maria Lúcia and Bernadette in this moment.

The general chapter was in the midst of this crisis, when on July 25<sup>th</sup>, it was time to celebrate the closing of the Centenary Year with our sisters in Rome and the entire Institute. Fr. Bill Hogan, guests from other religious congregations, friends, and our sisters in Rome started arriving at the Christian Brothers Generalate. Some of us did not feel much like celebrating. At first it seemed like the worst possible moment to be celebrating the closing of the

Centenary Year. Yet, in ways which we could not have imagined, I think it was just what we needed to do – to celebrate, as Institute, our Founder. This celebration of Gailhac helped us get through a very difficult time.

When the Chapter resumed the next day, I was invited to meet with the group of sisters nominated for general councillor. In time, with prayer, tremendous honesty, and trust in one another, we overcame the impasse. It was very important at that moment for the general superior elect to be able to meet and talk with those who were being considered for general councillor. Being on the general council involves living and working closely with one another and being part of the same team for five years. Someone may feel it would be impossible to work with the general superior, and the general superior may feel it would be impossible to work with the sister nominated.

As the election process continued, Sr. Rosa de Lima Pereira, of the Brazilian Province, and Sr. Marianne Murray, of the English-Irish Province, were each elected general councillor. I was then, and continue to be, very grateful to each of them. From that entire experience I knew that something had been lacking in the general chapter preparation in the provinces, vice-province, and region, and, indeed, in the election process itself.

We all needed to be much more aware that an important goal of the general chapter is to elect our congregational leadership. In the general chapter preparation, we focused a great deal on the direction of the Institute during the next five years, but did not give as much time to preparing the Institute for election of congregational leadership to lead us in that direction. This will touch some of us on a personal level, but it touches all of us. Those

called to serve on the general level are called from our provinces, vice-province, and region, and it is to be expected that we all need to be prepared to share these valuable sisters with the whole Institute.

Sr. Rosemary Lenehan's Financial Report to the general chapter was very important. She explained that the Programme Endowment Fund was initiated in 1987 to make funds available at the general level so that Institute-wide programs would not be totally dependent on province/vice-province/region contributions. The hope at the time was to increase the independent funding at the general level as provinces, the vice-province, and region would find it increasingly difficult in the future to make contributions with smaller numbers and less income. Indeed, that moment was already upon us. The budget for 1990-1991 already projected greater income from investments than from assessments. The Inter-Africa Fund was set up for the benefit of our sisters in Africa.

The Document of the General Chapter 1990 spoke of the Mission Statement as a gift for the life of the Institute and the world. The Chapter members shared that a deeper, clearer, common understanding of concepts related to the Mission Statement was reached during the Chapter. This understanding centered on what we mean when we say "those most in need of justice," "solidarity with the poor," and "perspective of the poor" (RSHM Constitutions 18-21 i). Mission was seen as encompassing every aspect of our lives – ministry, certainly, but also spirituality, community, life-style, formation, relationships, government, finances and use of material goods.

The three specific Chapter conclusions helped us to move in the direction set by the Mission Statement. They challenged us to

integrate the Mission Statement in all aspects of our life, individually and as provinces/vice-province/region, to evaluate present ministries and choose a new ministry using the “Process of Discernment on Choice and Evaluation of Ministries,” and to use our internationality to better critique our local situation and to make a greater impact globally. In reading these again, one senses the strong sense of mission that impelled us forward to respond to the greatest needs of our times (see Appendix 3: Mission Statement and Appendix 4: Process of Discernment on Choice and Evaluation of Ministry).



## SECOND TERM: 1990-1995

### FIRST YEAR AFTER GENERAL CHAPTER 1990

When the terms of Maria Lúcia Brandão and Bernadette McNamara ended at the end of the General Chapter 1990 and the terms of the new general councillors, Rosa de Lima Pereira (B) and Marianne Murray (EIP), began at the end of the general chapter on July 29, 1990, Rosa de Lima Pereira and Marianne Murray were both at the time engaged in ministries at the provincial level. Sr. Rosa de Lima Pereira was Provincial of the Brazilian Province and Sr. Marianne Murray was a Provincial Councillor of the English-Irish Province.

Just before the general chapter opened, Maria Lúcia, Bernadette, and I had concluded a consultation with the Brazilian Province for the appointment of the new Formation Directress. Sr. Marina Queiroz (B) had been named the new Formation Directress. With Rosa de Lima's election to the General Council, we would need to begin a consultation for the appointment of a new provincial of the Brazilian Province. On July 28 and 29, Rosa de Lima, Marianne, and I met with Fr. Bill Hogan and with Marina Queiroz to decide on the way forward.

It was decided that as an exception for an exceptional circumstance in the Brazilian Province, Marina Queiroz's name would be withdrawn from consideration before the provincial consultation process would begin, and in the letter to the Brazilian Province announcing the consultation, I would reaffirm her appointment as Formation Directress. It was also decided that Marianne could continue as Provincial Councillor, but she could not participate in decisions of the English-Irish Provincial Council

to which general council approval was required. Also on July 28 and 29, 1990, Mary Alice Young accepted the reappointment as General Secretary and Rosemary Lenehan accepted the reappointment as General Treasurer.

Once the Chapter concluded, departures happened very quickly as they always do, and there were pressing matters to consider. Sr. Ana M6 Senguaio, Regional of Mozambique, spoke with me of the need for a larger novitiate in the region. There were consultations for provincial that needed to happen in the Western American Province and in the Brazilian Province. There were other issues to consider, too, but at the close of the Chapter, Maria L6cia and Bernadette were no longer general councillors, and the new councillors, Marianne and Rosa de Lima, were on their way back to their provinces. Saying good-bye to Maria L6cia and Bernadette was difficult. We had worked together, traveled to parts of the Institute together, carried problems together. Sr. Maria do Ros6rio Dur6es (P), too, was leaving, and we had worked closely together in numerous ways. I remember our going together to Leonardo da Vinci-Fiumicino Airport, seeing them off, coming home to the Generalate and feeling very alone. Thankfully, Rosemary and Mary Alice remained as General Treasurer and General Secretary respectively. They were great, and I cannot imagine what it would have been like without them.

I returned to California for a few weeks' vacation. While in California, I received word that Sr. Patricia Lacy, our Eastern American Provincial, had lost consciousness while visiting our sisters in Kingston, England. Patricia had been diagnosed before the general chapter with cancer of the bone. She had had chemotherapy between sessions at the Chapter and had

participated fully in the general chapter. Her blacking-out led to tests which revealed a brain tumor.

While in the Western American Province, I was able to initiate the consultation for provincial, as Sr. Joan Treacy (WAP) would conclude her second term on June 30, 1991. Rosa de Lima, in her capacity as general councillor, initiated the consultation for a new provincial in Brazil. On my return to Rome in October, I stopped in New York to visit with Patricia Lacy. In light of the seriousness of her health, she was not able to consider a second term as provincial. It was a very difficult time for her and for the Eastern American Province. A consultation for provincial of the Eastern American Province began in November 1990. I remember being in Tarrytown and faxing the synthesis of the sisters' responses in the consultations to Marianne in Belfast and to Rosa de Lima in Belo Horizonte and our speaking together on a conference call. We availed of the latest technology in 1990, but the process was still challenging.

Marianne and Rosinha arrived in Rome shortly after Christmas in 1990. One of the first things we needed to consider was language. At the end of February 1991, Rosa de Lima went to Dublin and Marianne went to Portugal for two months of language study. At different times in March, Rosemary, Mary Alice, and I spent a few weeks of study in Portugal.

Meanwhile, there was an enlarged general council meeting to prepare. Fortunately, it was decided by the enlarged general council at the time of the General Chapter 1990 that the frequency of enlarged general council meetings be changed from meeting every 12 months to meeting every 15 months. This change made a

huge difference and was welcomed by all the members of the enlarged general council.

In October 1991, members of the enlarged general council met in White Plains, New York. The focus of this enlarged general council meeting was the implementation of the direction and action steps of the General Chapter 1990. Much attention was given to how the Mission Statement was being used in the provinces/vice-province/region. While it was evident that the Mission Statement was being used by individuals and local communities, provincial/vice-provincial/regional councils, and in corporate apostolates, common obstacles and difficulties were identified. One of the most pressing matters in 1991 was the Institute in Africa. The challenges were great.

### USING THE MISSION STATEMENT

The unanimous approval of the Mission Statement at the General Chapter 1990 was an arrival, but it was even more a departure. The challenge for us once the general chapter concluded was to use the Mission Statement to direct all aspects of our lives, as individuals, provinces/vice-province/region, and as Institute. To Rosa de Lima, Marianne Murray, and me it seemed like a *kairos* moment, and we spoke of this in our first letter to the Institute for February 24, 1991.

We have reason to believe that this moment in our history is a moment of grace and opportunity. It is a *kairos* moment. St. Paul seems to be writing to us when he says, "Do not receive the grace of God in vain. For God says, 'In an acceptable time I have heard you.' Now is the

acceptable time. Now is the day of salvation.”  
(2 Corinthians 6:1-3).

In that letter we wrote about the deaths we had experienced – smaller numbers, rising median age, letting go of cherished institutions – but we also wrote about being transformed, and we wrote:

For looking at the Institute today, one can see signs of hope and new life – the generosity of so many who are assuming greater responsibility for the life of the Institute, the recommitment of so many to the Mission of the Institute with fidelity to the “signs of the time,” the enthusiasm of our sisters in Africa for the establishment of the new novitiate in Zambia/Zimbabwe.

The focus of the Mission Statement was a point of new challenges. It was an impulse for new ministries and for new ways of doing old ministries. It not only gave direction to ministries and corporate works, but it also gave direction to our lives at local level, to personal and communal lifestyle, to Initial and Ongoing Formation Programs, and province/vice-province/region commitments and budgets.

Built into the implementation of the Mission Statement was ongoing evaluation. In order that the Institute might be aware of to what extent we were growing and being revitalized through the Mission Statement, we tried at the general level to ask the right questions to stir up life. We did this through letters, during visits to provinces/vice-province/region, with provincials at enlarged general council meetings. We asked:

What really is happening through the development and implementation of the Mission Statement? How are we changing?

How are we growing? To what extent are we being revitalized? Are we really committed to the Mission Statement? What are the calls we are hearing? What is the change being called for? What is needed for the future? Is there a greater sense of being one body for mission?

Having the Mission Statement did not take away the tension in moving forward. In fact, in some situations it created more tension, but this was a sign of life. All of us were passionate about the Mission, and the Mission Statement fanned the flame of our apostolic zeal.

### **THE SERVICE OF THOSE MOST IN NEED OF JUSTICE**

Since the Second General Synod of Bishops meeting in Rome in November 1971 on 'Justice in the World,' the Church had been calling us to the promotion of justice. Our own Sr. Margarida Maria Gonçalves (P) was an observer at that Synod, and in her letters to the Institute as General Superior following the Synod, she shared with us the dynamism and the outcomes of the Synod. One statement from the Second General Synod of Bishops, in particular, reverberated throughout the Church: "Action on behalf of justice and the participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel."

A few years later, our General Chapter 1975 issued a prophetic document, "Mission: A Call to Justice." The Institute was called to examine its use of resources and place more at the service of justice. At the following General Chapter 1980, after the broad based participation of the entire Institute, our revised Constitutions

were unanimously approved, and in Paragraph 8 of the Constitutions we speak of our commitment to evangelical justice “wherever we are and whatever our ministry.” The General Chapter 1985 approved the mandate that called for “Commitment to and Education for Justice.”

In the Mission Statement we say, “...we place ourselves and our resources at the service of those who are most in need of justice....” The Mission Statement identifies not only *with whom* and *on behalf of whom* we work, but also about *how* we work. We are to enable “the powerless, the deprived, the marginalized, the voiceless to work effectively for their own development and liberation.”

The Institute then, as now, had a diversity of expressions in carrying out the one Mission. The Mission Statement did not prioritize ministries. Rather it called for a process of discernment and evaluation of all ministries. The service of those most in need of justice is the integrating factor in all our ministries as we carry out the one Mission.

This was a great challenge. It was to direct not only ministries, but all aspects of our life. Together, we had to work at this. We had to discover the relationship of promoting the life and dignity of *all* our sisters and brothers (I have come that all may have life) and placing ourselves and our resources at the service of *those who are most in need of justice*).

## INTER-AFRICA COORDINATOR

1990-1995

It was a time of many new challenges for the Institute in Africa, especially with the implementation of an interprovincial novitiate program in Zambia and Zimbabwe. There were practical issues which arose in having one program for two provinces, the appointment of a formation directress, acceptance of pre-novices, the location of a novitiate, and eventually the decision to build a novitiate house in Chinhoyi. Veronica Brand, the Inter-Africa Coordinator, facilitated the follow-up to all of these.

Veronica's visits to our sisters in Mozambique, Mali, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, were a marvelous means of promoting communication and building unity in Africa. She was present at significant moments such as the First Profession in Mozambique since the reopening of the Novitiate, and she was a witness to the larger Institute reality. Her ability to speak and understand the spoken languages in each of the countries and the languages of the heart was a tremendous gift to all of us. She produced and circulated the Inter-Africa Newsletter, with contributions from the sisters in Africa, managing not to let the challenges of the postal services (or lack thereof!), or translation stop her. She produced an Inter-Africa directory and an Inter-Africa calendar. Please remember that we did not have the advances in communication technology that we have today.

The reopening of the novitiate in Mozambique and the opening of the novitiate for Zambia and Zimbabwe had financial implications. Veronica's help in investigating, preparing, and



submitting applications to various agencies for financial assistance was invaluable.

Veronica was a strong advocate for Africa. She kept Africa alive for the general council and the enlarged general council, and she was an articulate spokesperson for the needs of Africa, placing clearly before us ways to help in responding to those needs.

At the conclusion of Sr. Veronica's second three-year term, Sr. Virginia Mullane (EIP: Zambia) generously accepted the appointment as Inter-Africa Coordinator, beginning June 1, 1993. Virginia had spent years in Zambia, was at the Inter-Africa Assembly in 1987, and knew the road traveled for the establishment of the Zambia-Zimbabwe Novitiate. Virginia continued the trend toward greater communication within Africa as well as greater communication with the Institute. With having a novitiate in Quelimane (Mozambique) and in Chinhoyi (Zambia and Zimbabwe), there was a growing awareness that the Institute charism is a gift for Africa.

Virginia oversaw the planning of the Inter-Africa Assembly that took place in January 1996. Sisters who worked with her to plan the agenda and make arrangements for the Assembly were: Maria Teresa Rios (Mali), Lúcia Rodrigues (Mozambique), Christine Caldwell (Zambia), and Carol Schommer (Zimbabwe). In 1995 we realized that if a region were to be established for Zambia and Zimbabwe, the structure of the Inter-Africa Coordinator would need to be reviewed.

## MALI

Sisters in Zambia and Zimbabwe had frequent meetings with one another, but our sisters in Mali felt very isolated. They were geographically more distant from Mozambique, Zambia, and Zimbabwe than from Europe, and possibilities for communication and collaboration were very limited. The nearest telephone was at a distance of 80km from Kimparana, and it took six hours to reach Bamako, the capital city, by car.

The general council visited Mali twice over the period from 1985 to 1995 and the Inter-Africa Coordinator four times. To mark the Centenary of Father Gailhac's death, Sr. Maria de Lourdes Machado (B) was asked to come from Brazil in late 1989 / early 1990 to give a retreat on our RSHM charism in all four African countries. This was a moment of great unity. Two years later one sister from Mali and one from Mozambique participated in the workshop to explore multicultural living and inculturation shortly before the Zambia-Zimbabwe Novitiate opened in 1992. But the reality was that with the closure of the community in Sanzana in 1988 and the withdrawal of the French Vice-Province from Mali, the sense of isolation had intensified. The geographical distance of Kimparana from the other RSHM communities in Africa placed limits on collaboration.

In April 1994, the Portuguese Province studied its presence in Mali. The decision was made to continue for the immediate future, but doing so was becoming more difficult unless sisters from another Province went to Mali.

## ZAMBIA-ZIMBABWE NOVITIATE

1990-1995

As I wrote earlier in the chapter on The Journey to Establish A Novitiate for Zambia and Zimbabwe, it was just before the opening of the General Chapter 1990 that the general council received a proposal from Sr. Josepha O'Sullivan, Provincial of the English-Irish Province, and Sr. Patricia Lacy, Provincial of the Eastern American Province, to establish a novitiate for Zambia and Zimbabwe. The general council approved the proposal. The two provincials delegated to Sr. Veronica Brand, Inter-Africa Coordinator, responsibility for overseeing practical aspects leading up to its establishment, including the building, fundraising, contact with the Bishop, and so forth.

The decision to establish a Zambia and Zimbabwe Novitiate led to the process to appoint the formation directress. Part of the proposal to establish an interprovincial novitiate for Zambia and Zimbabwe was that the formation community would be made up of sisters from both the Eastern American and English-Irish Provinces. After consultation with our sisters who were, or who had recently been, in Zambia and in Zimbabwe and the two provincial councils, Sr. Bernardine Hoban (EAP) was appointed formation directress in January 1991. Josepha O'Sullivan (EIP Provincial) then asked Sr. Patricia Butler (EIP) to go to Zimbabwe to join Bernardine and the new formation community. Bernardine Hoban had spent years in Zimbabwe, and she was there when asked to become the formation directress. Patricia Butler, who had spent years in Zambia, was in England when asked to join the new interprovincial formation community.

Three dioceses in Zimbabwe were consulted about the location of the RSHM Novitiate. Two of them, Mutare and Chinhoyi, were open to the possibility. The Vocations Committee recommended Chinhoyi, a small town north-west of Harare, located on the road between Zambia and Zimbabwe, mainly because of its proximity to Zambia and also to the capital, Harare. Bishop Helmut Reckter, SJ, Bishop of Chinhoyi Diocese, Zimbabwe, offered to donate land for the construction of the novitiate. We accepted his offer, and on May 27, 1991 the decision was made to begin the construction of the novitiate house in Chinhoyi, Zimbabwe. There were many facets to all that was involved in the construction of the novitiate.

Veronica Brand, the Inter-Africa Coordinator, oversaw the construction of the building, and she maintained excellent communication and good relationships with the Bishop of Chinhoyi, Bishop Reckter, SJ, the Provincials of the Eastern American and English-Irish Provinces, the General Level, and our sisters in Zambia and in Zimbabwe.

On February 2, 1992, Bernardine, Patricia, and two Zimbabwean women, Jane Musiiwa and Mary Zvandikona, who had begun their pre-novitiate in Zambia where Sr. Joan Larrissey (EIP) was the Formation Directress of the Sisters of the Holy Spirit, moved into a rented house in Chinhoyi. Jane and Mary continued their pre-novitiate there with Bernardine and Patricia until the new novitiate house was ready.

On August 25, 1992, the official blessing of the new novitiate house in Chinhoyi took place. It was a tremendously joyous, hope-filled occasion. I had the privilege of being there to represent the Institute. The novitiate community and sisters from

Zambia and Zimbabwe took part in the Mass and Blessing at which Bishop Reckter, SJ, presided. Guests included neighbors, members of the local parish, youth and women's organizations, religious and priests who had collaborated with our sisters over the years, Sr. Evan Kachakwale, a Holy Spirit Sister, and Sr. Ana M6 Senguaio, of the Region of Mozambique. One week later, on September 2, 1992, Jane and Mary were received as novices at a simple, meaningful ceremony, at which relatives, RSHM from Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and I were present.

The beginning of the Zambia-Zimbabwe Novitiate was not without its challenges. Our wonderful, newly appointed formation directress, Bernardine Hoban, became ill and could not continue in that role and our first two novices left the novitiate during their first year. We asked Sr. Patricia Butler (EIP) to take on the role of formation directress, and she generously accepted the appointment.

As I wrote in an earlier chapter on establishing a novitiate for Zambia and Zimbabwe, our sisters in Zambia were sensitive to the situation of the Holy Spirit Sisters, the diocesan congregation formed and greatly supported by the English-Irish Province. They did not know how to tell young women, especially students at the RSHM supported St. Joseph School in Chivuna, where several of the first Holy Spirit Sisters were educated, that we were now open to receiving Zambians in the Institute. It was just at this moment that Ana M6 Senguaio (M) arrived providentially in Zambia from Mozambique for a sabbatical. Ana M6, who was one of the first Mozambicans to enter the novitiate in Mozambique when it was established in 1966, liked to tell the story of arriving in Chivuna and the students saying to her, "We did not know that the SCM

Sisters took black sisters," and she responded, "Well, here I am." From that moment on our story could be told along with that of the Holy Spirit Sisters in Zambia, and the students of St. Joseph's School would know that we welcomed Zambian vocations into our international Institute.

Young women once again expressed interest in entering the Institute. Some had gotten as far as the front door but did not enter. Another, I remember, had her bag packed and decided at the last minute that entering religious life was not for her. Then, four young women from Zambia each planned to enter. It was a very emotional day when they, the first Zambians, arrived at the novitiate in Zimbabwe on August 31, 1993. I will never forget Patricia Butler phoning me in Rome and describing how she went to the Zambian-Zimbabwean border to meet them. She said she could see them on the Zambian side coming through Passport Control. We were expecting four, and I asked her, "How many are there?" and she said, "Four." We were jubilant! Of this group of four, two left the Institute and Sr. Coltrida Mooya and Sr. Florence Muuka made Final Vows on March 23, 2005.

There were juridical questions that would arise with interprovincial collaboration, such as: to which province does the novice belong, who admits to profession, etc. We knew having a novitiate for both provinces would inevitably lead to the question we had foreseen when opening the novitiate: whether or not it was advisable to think of the creation of a Region for Zambia and Zimbabwe.

## MOZAMBIQUE

1990-1995

At the conclusion of the General Chapter 1990, I met with Sr. Ana M6 Senguaio, Regional of Mozambique, about the need to enlarge the novitiate house in Mozambique. We did not have a novitiate house large enough for the four second year novices, three pre-novices soon to be novices, and several other young women expected to begin the formation program soon. The current novitiate house in Quelimane with four bedrooms was no longer large enough, and we needed to extend the existing house to provide additional bedrooms, bathrooms, community room, dining room and kitchen. In February 1991, the Region of Mozambique formalized the request to construct an addition to the novitiate house in Quelimane. The Region had done planning on adding the needed rooms and on what the construction would cost. Ana M6 gave us an estimate of \$272,800.

The cost was high because during Mozambique's civil war, until 1992, materials had to be brought into Mozambique from other countries. The Region did not have money for this construction. We considered a loan from the general level or a province, but funds at the general level were limited. The Region had asked foundations for funding, but if these requests were not granted, there would be no way to repay a loan. In spite of this, on February 6, 1991, the general council gave the Region of Mozambique permission for the construction of the addition to the novitiate house in Quelimane.

We encouraged the Region to approach more foundations, and we asked Ana M6 to go ahead to work on plans for the

construction and to get more information on the time-line for when money would be needed. Rosemary Lenehan, General Treasurer, sent an appeal to communities and individuals during Lent 1991 and asked them to cut back on something during Lent and give the amount of money saved to the novitiate house in Mozambique. Over \$18,000 was contributed from provinces, vice-province, the Generalate Community, and friends of the RSHM.

The enlarged general council meeting in October 1991 gave considerable attention to Africa, and we brought to the enlarged general council the matter of the needed addition to the novitiate house in Mozambique. We explained the situation to the provincials and vice-provincial and asked them for their help. I will never forget their response when we presented the situation to them. They said, "Let us meet together, and we will get back with a response." After meeting together, they pledged a very significant contribution to the construction of the novitiate house addition. Even with this contribution, we knew there would be a shortfall in meeting all the expenses. The Region was responsible for seeking the remaining funding.

I continue to be very moved and filled with gratitude when I recall that special moment during the enlarged general council meeting in 1991. I shared this experience with general superiors in Rome, and a number of them from international congregations similar to our own told me they could never do that.

In March 1992, Sr. Maria Teresa Bastião (M) began a three year term as Regional of the Region of Mozambique. To assist her as she began her three year term, the general council created a temporary structure between the general council and the Council of the Region of Mozambique from March 1992-February 1995.



During those three years, we asked Veronica Brand, Inter-Africa Coordinator, to work with the new Regional and Council in specific areas. She was particularly helpful as a resource person for grant-writing. In 1992, the novitiate was a priority, and, with newly professed sisters, there was also need to consider the Juniorate Program.

At about the same time, on October 4, 1992, the Peace Accord was signed in Rome by the two warring factions in Mozambique. The signing of the Accord to end the civil war was followed in Mozambique by the laying down of arms and the beginning of a long process of reconciliation.

By November 1992, there was the possibility that the government could return to the Institute some of the properties that were nationalized in 1975, when Mozambique gained its independence. The government of Mozambique was searching municipal records to see who owned the properties before independence. This raised new questions for the Region. How does the Region feel about a corporate identity in a work, about responding to a call of the local Church, etc.? We knew, in November 1993, that property being returned to congregations was in extremely poor condition. Do we want properties such as these back? These were important questions for the Region to consider.

When we withdrew from cherished local communities like Gurué because of the civil war, our sisters expressed their hope to return as soon as the war ended. In December 1993, our hopes were realized, and we were able to return to Gurué. During this time of renewed hope, however, the Region suffered a devastating loss. A wonderful novice, Carolina Modesta Sicanso, was killed in an automobile accident in Quelimane, in August 1994.

At the time of the enlarged general council meeting in April 1994, the Region of Mozambique had 16 Perpetually Professed and 7 Temporary Professed members, 5 Novices, and 5 Candidates. Rosa de Lima and I were with our sisters at the Regional Chapter held in Maputo from January 12-14, 1995. There were promising signs of new life.

In an earlier chapter on Mozambique, I wrote of the reopening of the novitiate in Mozambique in 1989 with three novices: Albertina Páscoa José, Valéria Erneio, and Fátima Fernando. Sr. Albertina Páscoa José (M) and Sr. Fátima Fernando (M) will celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of their Religious Profession on September 30, 2016, and Sr. Valéria Erneio (M) will celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of her Religious Profession on May 24, 2017.

## ONGOING FORMATION

1990-1995

One of the areas that needed attention and that the general council was keen to take up was Ongoing Formation. Sr. Edmund Harvey (EAP) had helped the previous general council by gathering information on what was happening in this area in each of our provinces, vice-province, and region by presenting to the previous general council a report and analysis of ongoing formation in the Institute. It became abundantly clear that at Institute level we needed to call a group together to draw up Ongoing Formation Guidelines that would give all of us common elements for continuing formation.

The previous general council had recommended this, and the General Chapter 1990 had called for “promoting new life in the

one body for mission by ongoing formation for mission.” The General Council, Rosa de Lima Pereira, Marianne Murray and I, called upon Sr. Edmund Harvey to help us. A theologian and former general councillor, Edmund knew the Institute very well, had years of experience in ongoing formation, and was a very strong advocate for it. We were deeply grateful that her response was a wholehearted, “Yes.”

### *Task Force on Ongoing Formation*

We called together a Task Force of eight members, and each one brought the rich experience of her province/vice-province/region to benefit the whole. The Task Force was charged with developing common orientations as an Institute for Ongoing Formation, considering ways to strengthen and further collaboration, and examining existing structures in the area of ongoing formation. For the first time, the Programme Endowment Fund was used to help cover expenses of a Task Force Meeting. That was wonderful!

Members of the Task Force were: Srs. Edmund Harvey (Chair), Myriam Miranda (B), Rosamond Blanchet (EAP), Regina King (EIP), Françoise Wyckaert (F), Maria Leonor Fernandes (M), Maria Lúcia Brandão (P), and Angela Milioto (WAP). They came together at the Generalate from February 11-27, 1992. We faced challenges at the time because of our differences. For some, when speaking of “Ongoing Formation,” the continued growth of the individual was stressed; for others, continued formation of the community and serving the needs of the Institute at all levels was stressed. We had different theologies. There were different ways of implementing the Mission Statement. I recall the Task Force members working day and night, going over responses from the

formation teams of the provinces, vice-province, and region, finding ways to integrate our differences, and trying to put into words the essential elements of continuing formation for us, as Institute.

It was a challenge with our different cultures, different languages, and even thought processes, but we grew in understanding our differences and appreciating one another. We did not say in 1992 what we would say fifteen years later at the General Chapter 2007, that “we see differences not as lines of separation, but as meeting places for grace to unfold,” but we were on the path.

The Ongoing Formation Task Force considered ways to strengthen and further collaboration, to give vitality to provinces/vice-province/region, and to strengthen the sense of belonging to the Institute. In each province and region the importance of having a person or working group in ongoing formation was recognized to be an advocate and initiate opportunities in ongoing formation and to bring about more interest, responsibility, and visibility.

### *Guidelines for Ongoing Formation*

The general council gratefully accepted the Institute Guidelines for Ongoing Formation developed by the Task Force and enthusiastically approved them. On March 4, 1992, we were happy to send each sister her personal copy and asked each province, the vice-province, and region to implement them with programs being adaptable to the circumstance of the province, vice-province, and region.

Before the General Chapter 1995, each provincial, vice-provincial, and regional with her council was asked to evaluate the implementation of the Institute Guidelines for Ongoing Formation in their respective province, vice-province or region. We were very grateful to Sr. Edmund Harvey for synthesizing all the responses and for analyzing them. We felt encouraged by the growth that had taken place in strengthening our being One Body for Mission and by finding new ways to collaborate and to share experiences and resources across the Institute. The evaluation did raise the need, however, for our being more intentional about the use of the Guidelines. We seemed, at the time, to use the Guidelines as a checkpoint when province/vice-province/region planning had happened, rather than to incorporate the Guidelines into planning future steps.

The Institute Guidelines for Ongoing Formation 1992 were a means “to deepen our common vision, promote new life, revitalize our commitment, and strengthen our ability to act as one body for mission.” (Introduction to Ongoing Formation Guidelines, February 24, 1992)

## **FRENCH VICE-PROVINCE**

1990-1995

When the new General Council, Rosa de Lima Pereira, Marianne Murray, and I, came together after the General Chapter 1990, the French Vice-Province had had a special collaborative relationship with the English-Irish Province for two and a half years. Marguerite-Marie Lyng’s interim period as Provincial (1987-1989) and then three-year term as Vice-Provincial was to end on June 30,

1992. In the consultation for the appointment of a Vice-Provincial which followed, Sr. Marie-France Correau (F) was appointed to a three year term, beginning July 1992.

### *Evaluation of collaborative structure*

The first evaluation of the collaborative structure of the French Vice-Province and the English-Irish Province took place after the first two years, in 1990. In April/May 1993 the second evaluation of the collaborative structure took place. The two Councils evaluated the structure in the areas of formation, communication, finances, and the working relationship between the two Councils. The evaluation provided encouragement and support for the Vice-Provincial and Council. Relationships had been built and strengthened among individuals and groups who worked together. The collaboration was growing naturally, and there was growth in trying to see that the collaborative structure was mutual. Joint meetings took place in formation and the Finance Commission. Each had a gift to offer the other.

### *Finances*

It was a critical time in the history of the Institute in France, and a great deal was happening with regard to the finances of the French Vice-Province. The Finance Commission had recommended to the Vice-Provincial Council the selling of the property in Rennes and, in February 1993, the decision was made to do so. The French Province/Vice-Province owed money to the English-Irish Province for past payments on insurance, and money from the sale of Rennes was a means of paying back money owed the English-Irish Province in April 1993.

### *Financial and Spiritual Patrimony*

Meanwhile, the Bon Pasteur had been on the real-estate market for a long time. An offer had been made to purchase the property, but the offer was not satisfactory. As of 1991, Sisters of the Vice-Province initiated a project reflecting the realization of our beginnings in Béziers, from the time of Gailhac, Mère St. Jean, and our first sisters, up to our own time and proposed a project called the Centre Gailhac. There was the possibility that the Bon Pasteur building could be remodeled to house both the Centre Gailhac and the residence for our older sisters. The Motherhouse at the time was a very large house for a relatively small number of sisters, and there was an urgency to get the older sisters in an environment that responded more to their needs.

The Maison d'Enfants from the time of Father Gailhac had been located at one end of the Motherhouse property. The building was in great need of renewal, and the aged plumbing and electricity were especially in great need of attention. On May 24, 1993 there was an inquiry about giving land in the park to the Maison d'Enfants on which the Association Jean Gailhac could build a new building, in exchange for money which the Maison d'Enfants had recently invested on their part of the Motherhouse (before the mortgage was complete!). The Vice-Province studied the question, and on August 9, 1993 permission was given to give a piece of land in the park to the Maison d'Enfants on which to construct a new building. The Maison d'Enfants construction in the park was projected to take about a year and a half. It would be a new beginning for this work so loved by Father Gailhac.

### *New Initiative*

A few weeks later, on August 27, 1993 the Vice-Provincial Council made the decision to use the Bon Pasteur for three things: the community for the older sisters, the Vice-Provincial Center, and the Centre Gailhac.

Many things happened that summer in Béziers. One of these was that a phase of the Experience of Internationality took place at the Motherhouse. The newer members had been profoundly affected by their two weeks in the Motherhouse, by touching our history, by being in the house of our first community, and by being with the sisters of the Motherhouse Community. They expressed renewed enthusiasm for the sense of our origins.

In February 1994, the City of Béziers approved plans for remodeling the Bon Pasteur, and on March 18, 1994 allowed the decision to be concretized. The Bon Pasteur would be a residence for our older sisters, the Centre Jean Gailhac, and the offices of the Vice-Province. Now two decisions had been made: the Maison d'Enfants would go to the new construction in the park, the sisters of the Motherhouse would go to the remodeled Bon Pasteur. We planned to be out of the Motherhouse by the end of 1995.

This raised the question of the Motherhouse as the place of our beginnings. The issue raised was whether it would be possible to sell part of the Motherhouse complex, its parcels, and to retain the original house, crypt, and chapel. These places spoke of our origins and, as such, were considered "spiritual patrimony" of the Institute, and the French Vice-Province was formally confirmed in the responsibility to continue to make decisions in relation to that.



What needed to be preserved was our presence and history in Béziers.

During this critical time, a joint meeting of the Provincial and Vice-Provincial Councils took place. They spoke of collaboration, participation, and communication. Minutes of council meetings and Initial and Ongoing Formation Team Minutes were sent to Sr. Marie-France Correau, French Vice-Province Provincial, and Sr. Catherine Dolan, English-Irish Province Provincial. It was decided that the Vice-Provincial and Provincial would go to each other's Chapters.

On March 31, 1995, it was decided not to do anything with the Bon Pasteur chapel if we can keep the Motherhouse chapel. The Motherhouse complex was treated as three different parcels. The Vice-Provincial Council wanted to keep the original house, the Souvenir Room, and the stairs of the first community. The staircase could be moved, if necessary, the Souvenirs could go to the original community room. The Maison d'Enfants hoped to be in the park in its new building in September 1995. Sr. Sabine-Marie Decamps (F) and Sr. Bernadette McNamara (F) were missioned by Marie-France Correau to launch the Centre Gailhac in 1995, and they were given a three-year mandate.

At the General Chapter 1995, the Vice-Province was very aware of its privilege to have the cradle of the Institute's life and was anxious to perpetuate this for generations of Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary, but the Vice-Province expressed its need for support and collaborative help from the Institute.

Marie-France Correau spoke of the present structure of the Vice-Province and the burden that it places on the small number of

sisters able to assume responsibilities for the Vice-Province and for remunerative ministries to support the communities. It was suggested that a greater degree of help was needed from the Institute, and that a recommendation expressing this could be made by the Chapter body to the new General Council. The General Chapter 1995 made the following recommendation on the Institute's Spiritual Patrimony in France:

- That the General Council takes steps to identify and preserve the items which are our patrimony (significant historic places: Motherhouse, Bon Pasteur chapel, park, Archives/Sources and objects, etc.). We further recommend that the care for our spiritual patrimony not be assigned to a single province or region.
- Because we desire a structure for the French Vice-Province which can better facilitate its life and mission, we ask the General Council to initiate a structure that will lead to a new way for the French Vice-Province.

As recorded in the minutes of the General Chapter 1995, it was recommended that the general council create a Task Force on the Institute level to study and present viable proposals about structures, both RSHM human and financial resources, and within that context, ensure the continuity of the project Centre Gailhac, newly named 'La Margelle.' This project envisioned: to continue to study the Sources, to offer opportunities for formation, and to be a center/space of Welcome and Hospitality in Béziers. This recommendation was recorded in the Minutes for consideration by the General Council, neither affirming nor not affirming.

The collaborative relationship with the English-Irish Province gave new life to the French Vice-Province, helped the

sisters to grow, to be more open, and to be more Institute-minded, but the collaboration did not answer the inherent structural problems facing the small number of sisters in the French Vice-Province. On November 18, 1995, the outgoing general team discussed this with the incoming general council.

## **EXPERIENCE OF INTERNATIONALITY FOR NEWER MEMBERS**

1992-1993

At the Initial Formation Task Force Meeting in January 1989, a felt need had been expressed to provide newer members in temporary profession or those who have recently made Perpetual Profession with an opportunity to experience our internationality and to build up a greater sense of the body as a whole. This experience was envisioned as being integral to the Institute formation program, as a means of broadening horizons and ways of thinking by providing an opportunity for concrete exposure to other cultures. Sisters in the same stage of religious life would get to know one another and be able to develop RSHM peer friendships and support that was not always possible when there may only be a few people in initial formation in a province/region.

This recommendation received great support from the general council in 1990, but because of a lack of time before the upcoming general chapter, the general council who served from 1985-1990 made the recommendation to the next general council that there be an experience of internationality for newer members of the Institute, those in temporary vows and those who have recently made perpetual profession. This recommendation was one of the first matters taken up in 1991 by the new general council.

### *Planning Committee*

Rosa de Lima Pereira, Marianne Murray, and I called upon three sisters with a wealth of knowledge and experience to develop the Experience of Internationality for Newer Members: Srs. Margaret Fielding (EIP), Maria de Lourdes Machado (B), and Rosalina Nunes (P). They first came to Rome from December, 9-20, 1991 and met with the general council at several points during their meeting. Together they developed the various stages of the Experience of Internationality and identified specific objectives to be realized in each stage. In January 1992, we wrote to the Institute explaining the objectives of the program and asking for cooperation.

### *Phases of Experience*

The Experience was to take place in four stages.

Stage 1: The first stage was to be one of preparation. During this time, many of the participants would study Portuguese or English in order to participate as fully as possible in the different stages of the whole Experience. Recommended reading would also be part of this Experience.

Stage 2: The second stage was to be a formative experience. Each participant would spend four weeks in a RSHM community in another province/vice-province/region or part of her own province/vice-province/region in order to experience life in a culture different from her own. As she would involve herself in the life and ministry of the community, she would learn the social, cultural, political, and ecclesial reality there and how the RSHM are responding to that reality through the insertion of the

community and its ministries. She would be encouraged to reflect individually and with others, on her experience.

Stage 3: The third stage would take place with all the participants gathering in Béziers and in Braga, Portugal for 30 days in order to share experiences, reflect together on our history, spirituality, and on our life as RSHM today and in the future.

Stage 4: The fourth stage would begin after Braga, in the continuation of the Experience in life. This stage would focus on translating the Experience into each one's daily life situation and into the life of her province/vice-province/region and the Institute as a whole.

Twenty-eight newer members participated in the Experience. Provincials, vice-provincial, and regional were asked to submit a list of host communities for the newer members. The list of host communities was then sent to the newer members who were asked to discern with their Formation Directress and Provincial Council three preferences for where she would like to go, along with the reason. The Planning Team and the general council worked together in choosing the host communities for each newer member, and most were able to be given their first choice.

The Second Stage was an Institute-wide experience of transcending boundaries:

- from Brazil to Ireland, Mexico, Mozambique, Portugal, and the United States
- from Mexico to the United States
- from Mozambique to Portugal

- from Portugal to Brazil, England, Mali, Mexico, Mozambique, Portugal, and Zimbabwe
- from the United States to Brazil, Ireland, and Mexico.

Although this was called an Experience of Internationality for Newer Members, in reality it was an experience of internationality for all of us. For those of us who were welcoming the newer members from other provinces/vice-province/region into our communities and provinces/vice-province/region, it was an occasion to be in contact with another reality of our Institute and to strengthen the bonds of unity among us. The interest, encouragement, and accompaniment of newer members in Stages 1 and 2 by sisters of their own 'home' province/vice-province/region helped them greatly. I remember, in particular, newer members of the Brazilian Province speaking of the letters they received from elder sisters of their Province. It meant so much to them to know they were prayed for and supported and to learn from some of the older sisters that when they were young religious, they, too, were fearful of certain things.

### *Béziers and Braga*

With the rich experience of another culture fresh in their minds and hearts, the newer members came together in Stage 3: Béziers, June 1-15, 1993 and Braga, Portugal, June 16-30, 1993. In Béziers, Rosa de Lima and Marianne facilitated the participants' sharing of their experience of RSHM life and mission in their own provinces/vice-province/region and during their formative experiences. I spoke on the Institute today and focused on the charism, using the Biblical image of a treasure hidden in the field. Talks were given on RSHM history, spirit, and mission by Srs. Kathleen Connell (EAP),

Marjorie Keenan (EAP), and Margaret Fielding (EIP) and visits were made to places associated with Father Gailhac, Mère St. Jean, and our first sisters.

We traveled together by bus to Portugal and arrived on June 16 in Braga. Sr. Rosa do Carmo (P) gave an introduction to our history and present history in Portugal. Sr. Margarida Maria Gonçalves (P) spoke on her experience of Vatican II and Sr. Maria de Lourdes Machado (B) gave a talk on her experience of the Latin American Conferences of Medellin and Puebla. The group looked at the challenges and opportunities of apostolic life today in the context of Scripture, our Constitutions, and Mission Statement. The final week in Braga included two days of retreat in light of Gailhac's Christology, led by Maria de Lourdes and Maria Antónia Quinteiro Lopes (P).

Our time in Béziers was particularly memorable. I was somewhat worried that all of us descending on the Motherhouse might be very disruptive for our older sisters. I remember sitting on the main corridor with Sr. Jeanne d'Arc Lefebvre (F) as the music was playing loudly in the community room and the house was literally shaking from the dancing. I asked her how she and the other sisters felt about the commotion. She smiled broadly and said they were all delighted with the life that the group had brought them.

Our trip by bus from Béziers to Portugal was another memory that I continue to carry with me. I prayed for our safety the whole way, around every corner. In hindsight I think it was very risky to have had all of us on the same bus, but nonetheless, we were all traveling together in June 1993, and we made it safely to Braga. The group was singing away as we drove through Spain

and the moment we entered Portugal our Portuguese sisters took out the glasses they had tucked away and opened bottles of Portuguese wine to share with everyone but the driver. It was a wonderful moment.

### *Evaluation*

In the evaluations at all levels which followed, we all recognized that the Experience of Internationality was a very strong moment of formation in the Spirit and Charism for newer members and for all in the provinces/vice-province/region who were involved in any way. Much of the success of the Experience of Internationality was due to the excellent work of the Planning Group – Margaret, Maria de Lourdes, and Rosalina. The entire experience was truly collaborative: among the General Council, Planning Committee, provincial/vice-provincial/regional councils, formation directresses, provincial/vice-provincial/regional levels working with formation teams, local receiving communities, and newer members.

The experiences of each of the participants in Stages 1 and 2 made it possible that when they arrived in Béziers they were not strangers. They were confident, eager to learn more from one another and from all that Béziers could teach them. They had been to other parts of the Institute, and they felt there were no boundaries between provinces, vice-province, and region and among themselves. The speakers in Béziers and in Braga were tremendously inspiring. They conveyed not only the Institute's history, but they breathed and imparted our spirit.

There are no words to adequately describe the gracious hospitality we experienced at the Motherhouse and in Braga. At the end of their time together, the participants in the Experience of



Internationality wanted to share a message with the Institute. Their message was profound and challenging in 1993, and I find it profound and challenging today. Please take it up and read it again, or perhaps read it for the first time (see Appendix 5: Experience of Internationality for the Newer Members, Message to All the sisters of the Institute, Braga, June 29, 1993).

When the Experience of Internationality 1993 ended, we could look back and say that it met the objectives set forth in planning it. We were all very grateful to Margaret, Maria de Lourdes, and Rosalina. I stay in touch with some of our sisters who were part of that Experience. They have said that it changed them forever. Some, I know, continue to be in communication with others in the Experience. Years later, we continue to reap the fruit of that marvelous, grace-filled Experience of Internationality for Newer Members.

## **LEADERSHIP**

The election of two general councillors during the general chapter of 1990 was a painful time. It was a time of struggle, a time of enormous challenge, and fundamentally a time of grace. From that moment many of us knew that we had to face the issue of leadership in the Institute.

Leadership had been an area of difficulty identified by Coopers & Lybrand in its analysis of the Institute Self-Study in 1986. "Leadership is an area of weakness, of our fragility," they said. It was a question at all levels – local, provincial, general. The General Chapter 1990 asked for a study of the election process and recognized that we need to look at the underlying issues.

Leadership may be a deeper question than process or structure, one related to attitude and understanding of Institute. There was some sense at the general chapter that 'province' was more important than 'Institute.' The need for education was recognized, raising awareness of elections for congregational leadership at a general chapter, and the general level's role in unifying and leading the Institute.

The general council took the matter up in 1993 when it invited the Institute to reflect on this important issue. The reflection on leadership included a formative dimension as well as gathering information on things that block/encourage one to say yes. Categories for sharing were: my perception of the role; my perception of myself – my skill/abilities; my values/beliefs; my feelings; my perception of other people – how the province/vice-province/region regards the role and how my local community (or friends) regards the role.

Sisters were invited to reflect together in small groups and then each one was to answer the questions personally. The responses of the province/vice-province/region were collated and then sent to the General Council. Rosa de Lima Pereira, Marianne Murray, Rosemary Lenehan, Mary Alice Young, and I reflected on the responses from each province, the vice-province and the region and from the Institute as a whole. We then asked Sr. Mary Ann Buckley, SHCJ, Superior General of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus, Fr. Bill Hogan, CSC, Dr. Jean Alvarez, and Sr. Nancy Conway, CSJ, to give their main impressions after reading the material.

The responses gave us information about perceptions, attitudes, and thoughts of sisters about leadership in the Institute.

A clear strength was the enthusiasm sisters have for the Institute and specifically for internationality. An obstacle to saying yes to leadership at the general level, however, included difficulty to learn languages and to adapt to different cultures. The demands and realities of working in an international setting and adapting to various cultures was frightening to many. Another strength coming through many of the responses was faith and an openness to answer a call from God, the Community, to serve for the sake of the Institute. However, others expressed fear of what would be involved, and this prevented them from saying yes. A third strength was that directly or indirectly the need for leadership was affirmed. However, others saw the role at general level as one that separates one from the real world, that bureaucratic tasks are far from the persons to whom these are directed.

We heard again a matter that had come up in Coopers & Lybrand's Analysis of the Self-Study: being satisfied and happy where one is. A deeper issue in some places was serving the Institute/province/vice-province/ region is not as worthwhile as serving in other expressions of ministry. Also, an issue raised was that if one was taken out of a particular position to serve at the general level, the position may not be open to her when she returned 'home' after service at the general level.

The strongest factors drawing sisters to say yes were having the necessary gifts and skills, receiving strong support, having the sense of being called to serve the Body for Mission, and knowing that one would be collaborating with others. As one would imagine, the strongest factors inhibiting sisters from saying yes were having a sense of one's limitations, being moved by fears

and difficulties, being moved by negative perceptions and attitudes.

The leadership issue is something we all have to face. In coming years, the number of Institute membership will become smaller and the median age will continue to rise. Health concerns will increase with age, and it will become more difficult to find sisters open to say yes to the general level.

All of this was shared with the enlarged general council at its' meeting in 1994. It was thought the implementation of the Institute Ongoing Formation Guidelines in each province/vice-province/region could help to train sisters for leadership by helping with the skills, knowledge, and confidence needed to assume leadership roles. Part of sabbatical time, workshops, and programs geared to leadership training were seen as being helpful. We recognized, too, that leadership training needs to be part of Initial Formation. New members need to be encouraged and given opportunities to develop their gifts and talents to be leaders. In view of our internationality, the study of another language and having experiences of living in another culture were encouraged. These, as we learned from the Experience of Internationality for Newer Members, can help to dispel fear and help one to get in touch with inner resources she did not know she had.

We knew that we had to do more to educate the Institute about the role of the general level in the life of the Institute. As a means to do this, one of us on the general council was present at provincial chapters, vice-provincial and regional chapters before the General Chapter 1995. We asked that an Institute Day be built into the provincial/vice-provincial/regional chapters' schedule to help educate sisters about the general level and to raise awareness

of the need to elect congregational leadership at the general chapter.

## SHARING RESOURCES

1990-1995

We have different currencies, economic conditions, and social and political situations in the various countries where the Institute is present. The Common Reporting System, which was approved in 1989, helped the general council considerably in reviewing annual province, vice-province, and region finance reports.

The Annual Report included sources of income (salaries, pensions, rentals, and investments), major expenses, fund balances, housing (RSHM or rent) and ministry analysis – the number of sisters in remunerative and non-remunerative ministries. Even though there were problems in using the new Reporting System, it helped us to get a realistic financial picture of the Institute. We were able to come together to respond to a number of challenges, such as to enlarge the novitiate house of the Region of Mozambique (1991) and to plan and implement the Experience of Internationality for Newer Members (1993).

We knew that as our numbers and financial income would diminish, the day would come when provinces, vice-province, and region would not be able to be assessed at the same level as in previous years. Sr. Rosemary Lenehan, General Treasurer, regularly reminded treasurers that the overall goal was to work toward the greater possibility of the general level supporting itself through investments. Provinces were encouraged to contribute to Institute funds from extraordinary province income. The Inter-

Africa Fund was established in 1990, and the practice of contributing to the Programme Endowment Fund 5% of any income, principal, and interest received during a year from the sale of property gave visible expression to our solidarity within the Institute and proved to be a valuable investment for the future.

The situation of the Generalate house remained precarious during 1985-1995, as our contract with the Missions Etrangères de Paris (MEP) to rent the Generalate house at Via Adelaide Ristori had expired and needed to be renewed every three years. We had neither property nor money for the purchase of a house. In those years, income from the Generalate Building Fund (monies from the sale of the 'old Generalate' on the Villa Lauchli property to Marymount International School, Rome) was directed to the payment of rent and the cost of maintenance of the Generalate house we resided in at Via Adelaide Ristori.

A Generalate house owned by the Institute needed to be considered in long-range planning. If the lease would not be renewed, the provinces, vice-province, and region would be asked to help. Vacating the current Generalate at Via Adelaide Ristori in a crisis would have a great effect on the work of the general council. In her Financial Report to the enlarged general council, Belo Horizonte, Brazil, April 1994, Rosemary Lenehan reported on the status of funds at the General Level:

Beatification Fund – has grown with the capital being preserved and the interest used for expenses related to the Sources.

Generalate Building Fund – is increasing in value and was initiated with monies received from the sale of the first Generalate house. The situation of the Generalate house was

precarious, since our contract was due to expire in December 1996, and we had neither property nor money for the purchase of a house.

Program Endowment Fund – its objective is to give freedom to the general council to carry out programs for the benefit of the entire Institute, without having to request financial help from the provinces. An example of this was the 1993 Experience of Internationality for Newer Members in Braga and Béziers. Since the establishment of the Fund, efforts have been made to increase it. The Task Force on Sharing Resources, which developed policies for the Institute, suggested ways for increasing the Fund, i.e. contributing 5% from the sale of property.

Inter-Africa Fund – has grown and was used for expenses for courses, retreats, etc. for the sisters of Mozambique, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Mali.

Operating Fund – ordinary receipts came from assessments and income from investments. Expenses included financial support for the administration of the Region of Mozambique.

Solidarity Fund – major source of income is from donations. Provinces have contributed because of heightened awareness of need; sharing enables the general level to respond on behalf of the total Institute to many needs of the world. The Solidarity Fund was not really a fund in the same way as the other funds administered at general level. Whatever contribution was received in a given year was

meant to be shared for a great need by the general council as a gift from the Institute.

Though there was a clear mandate from the General Chapter 1985 on "Sharing Resources," Coopers & Lybrand's Analysis of the data in the Self-Study 1986 indicated that it would be difficult to share resources owing to the divisionalized structure of the Institute. Actually, from 1985-1995, provinces did contribute to needs of the Institute. When a need was addressed at enlarged general council meetings and information was shared, there was a generous response.

### **THE ROAD TO BECOME A REGION FOR RSHM IN ZAMBIA AND ZIMBABWE**

The interprovincial novitiate of the Eastern American and English-Irish Provinces was established in response to those who had been attracted to the living of the Institute charism in Zambia and Zimbabwe and who wanted to enter the Institute. In establishing the novitiate for Zambia and Zimbabwe, it was inevitable that questions would arise about the structure of government. Relating to London and to Tarrytown worked well when the RSHM was a missionary presence, but with the establishment of the novitiate, the Institute made a strong statement that we wanted to facilitate the charism's growth in African soil. Structures would fit the needs in Africa, rather than Zambia and Zimbabwe needing to fit the structures. Questions arose, especially with regard to maintaining relationships with one's home province.

It was with great sadness to us all that Sr. Patricia Lacy, Provincial of the Eastern American Province, died on May 16, 1991.



She had lived in Dangamvura, Zimbabwe before becoming Provincial, and she knew the local reality there. The leadership of the Eastern American Province was assumed by Sr. Martina Crowley (EAP), and Martina spared nothing to follow through on the commitment of the Eastern American Province to the novitiate in Chinhoyi.

At the enlarged general council meeting in White Plains, New York, in October 1991, seeds were planted for the possibility of a new structure in Africa. In September 1992, the general council authorized a study concerning the creation of a region, and during the enlarged general council meeting in Dublin in 1993, Martina Crowley and Catherine Dolan, the Eastern American Province and English Irish Province Provincials, Veronica Brand, Inter-Africa Coordinator, Rosa de Lima, Marianne, Rosemary, Mary Alice, and I met to go over plans for the study. We all understood that any new structure would be built from the ground up, to respond to the needs of Zambia and Zimbabwe. We planned that, mid-way through the Study Group's work and before concretizing their recommendation, they would meet with the general council in Rome. The provincial levels of the Eastern American and English-Irish Provinces would be involved at the meeting, and we understood specifics would need to be worked out between provinces. The study took place from February 1993 to August 1994. Sr. Florence Reilly (EAP: Zimbabwe) directed the study in Zimbabwe and Sr. Philippa O'Sullivan (EIP: Zambia) directed it in Zambia.

This may seem to us now like a long period of time for a study. However, a great deal happened during that time. Information was gathered from our sisters in Zambia and

Zimbabwe and from other international religious congregations. Our sisters in Mozambique were consulted. It was a time of education, much prayer, reflection, and dialogue with the sisters in Zambia and Zimbabwe, the Eastern American and English-Irish Provincial Councils, and the General Level. Using the information they gathered, Florence and Philippa drew up a rough draft of a proposal for a region.

In May 1994, the sisters in Zambia and Zimbabwe met in Harare to reflect together and to share their reactions to the draft proposal. Fears and hesitations emerged. For the most part these were regarding the relationship to the home province – home visits, sickness, retirement, being cut off from the larger group. The need for continued support from home provinces was recognized, as were cultural differences – not only Western and African, but the two different province cultures. Our sisters in Zambia and Zimbabwe were feeling and saying that the entire venture was fraught with difficulties. Nonetheless, at the assembly of our sisters in Zambia and in Zimbabwe in May/June 1994, a proposed structure was agreed upon. This proposal then went to the provincials.

From August 22-27, 1994, a meeting of the Zambia/Zimbabwe Study Group was held at the Generalate to consider the possibility of a governmental structure for Zambia and Zimbabwe. Rosa de Lima, Marianne, Rosemary, Mary Alice, and I from the General Level, Martina Crowley, EAP Provincial, Moira Lever, EIP Provincial Councillor, Florence Reilly (EAP: Zimbabwe), and Philippa O'Sullivan (EIP: Zambia), met together to examine and reflect on a proposal for a possible Zambia-Zimbabwe Region.

We were greatly helped at our meeting by the presence and wise counsel of Fr. Bill Hogan. Bill, who had been helping us since the first moment the possibility of a novitiate for Zambia and Zimbabwe arose years before, was a font of knowledge and wisdom and his calm manner steered us through discussions with great ease. He instilled confidence in us all. Florence and Philippa helped us to understand more completely the feelings and ideas expressed by our sisters in Zambia and Zimbabwe and how they incorporated these feelings and ideas into the proposal being submitted for consideration. During the meeting, the proposal for a region was refined once more. After this meeting in August 1994, a period of time was needed for our sisters in Zambia and Zimbabwe to reflect upon and consider what would be involved. It was very important that no one be pressured into accepting something prematurely, before everyone would have time to assimilate it. No timeline was set for when a decision had to be made.

About five months after our meeting in Rome, in January 1995, Rosa de Lima, Fr. Bill Hogan and I met with our sisters of Zambia and Zimbabwe at Lake Kariba, on the border of the two countries. Fr. Bill pointed out there was no reason to change immediately from the present system of home visits, etc. but to take time to get to know one another, understand differences, and grow into the new system, believing that the necessary gifts were in the group. We had an important time of prayer together. There were questions and a lot of honest sharing. Those present at the meeting were unanimous in their support of a region and eight of those present and two who had responded by letter were able to commit to the new region.

At the end of the meeting, those present wrote to the Provincial Councils of the Eastern American Province and the English-Irish Province expressing their support for the establishment of a region. The two provincial councils then needed to consider the decision of whether or not they supported the establishment of a region, and if they both approved, the proposal would go to the general council. It was understood that it was not necessary to have everything in place and finalized before the region was established.

In May 1995, the two provincials, Catherine Dolan (EIP) and Martina Crowley (EAP), visited Zambia and Zimbabwe to speak personally with the sisters who had committed to the region. Then on June 2, 1995, the Provincial Councils of the Eastern American Province and of the English-Irish Province gave their support for the establishment of the Zambia-Zimbabwe Region (see Appendix 6). The two Councils, while recognizing the small numbers and difficulties to be faced, expressed their commitment to go forward in faith. The General Council, encouraged by the support of both Provincial Councils and the commitment of sisters to be members of the new region, made the decision to establish a region for Zambia and Zimbabwe on June 16, 1995 (see Appendix 7). The region would relate directly to the general superior and her council in conjunction with (and to) the Eastern American and English-Irish Provincial Councils.

Two months after our meeting in Kariba, Fr. Bill Hogan died unexpectedly in Rome on March 15, 1995. Never will I forget Sr. Marguerite McLoughlin (WAP) coming into the Generalate library where Rosa de Lima, Marianne, Rosemary, Mary Alice, and I were about to begin a meeting and telling us that we had just

received a phone call to tell us that Bill had died. We were all in shock. I had spoken with him the day before, and he had a bad cold. The morning of his death he had presided at Mass at the Generalate of the Irish Christian Brothers in Rome, and, after Mass, had difficulty breathing. He went to his room, could not get his breath, and died. Bill's death had a profound impact on us all. Many of us had come to know him and respect him. We were planning on his being with us at the general chapter, and we expected he would be with us when we reached the decision about the new region. I remember him saying, "Setting up a region will not take away the questions or the fragility. It will be a challenge. Many things will need to be worked out. It is a step in faith for the whole Institute."

## GENERAL GOVERNMENT

### *General Government Task Force*

Father Gailhac intended that the Institute of the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary be One Body for Mission. This is a gift for us all and for the life of the world, but it is not lived without its challenges. The general level is entrusted in a special way with promoting unity and with strengthening the Body for Mission.

In the years immediately following the general chapter of 1990, different issues arose related to government at the general level, and we felt it was necessary to call together a group of sisters who could study aspects of general government in light of what is said about general government in our Constitutions and what is our lived reality. In 1993, we asked Maria Lúcia Brandão (P), Catherine Dolan (EIP), Bernadette McNamara (F), and Carol

Schommer (EAP) to help us by serving on the General Government Task Force. They brought a wealth of knowledge and experience about the general and provincial levels to the Task Force.

They met for the first time in August 1993 and decided to request input from each of the sisters who had been part of general government since 1975 or had been a delegate to the General Chapter 1990, as well as information gathered from other international congregations. Maria Lúcia, Catherine, Bernadette, and Carol met for a second time at the Generalate from December 13-18, 1993. As a result of their reflection on the material they received, their own experience, and discussion with Rosa de Lima, Marianne, Rosemary, Mary Alice, and me, they made several recommendations. The recommendations which they made to the general council related to a preparatory step in the election of the general council, the process for the election of the general superior and general councillors at the general chapter, composition of the general council, the date of the beginning of the new general council's term, the length of the general council's term, and a procedure for missioning by the general superior. The general council brought these recommendations to the enlarged general council in April 1994 for further reflection and their reaction, at which time it was suggested that the general council act on two of the recommendations and that the other three should be sent to the General Chapter 1995.

## *Recommendations*

The two recommendations to act on were:

Surfacing names of general superior and general councillors before chapter:

- That names for general superior and general councillors be surfaced before the general chapter. The surfacing of names before the general chapter would hopefully help sisters to be prepared for the possibility of being nominated for a position of leadership by the general chapter.

Missioning by general superior:

- That a process be set up for missioning by the general superior. The process identified the steps in the general superior missioning a sister anywhere in the world where the Institute recognizes a need.  
(RSHM Constitutions 35, 51)

The recommendations sent to the General Chapter 1995 were:

Beginning of general council's term:

- That the newly elected superior general and general councillors take office four months from the end of the general chapter. This recommendation would allow for a time of transition for the newly elected and the outgoing general superior and general councils. During this period the outgoing general superior and general council would continue their responsibilities for the Institute.

Length of general council's term:

- That the terms of office of the general superior and general councillors be lengthened to six years with a possibility of re-election [in 1994, the term of office of the general council was five years with a possibility of re-election].

Composition of general council:

- That there be a general council of five persons, including the general treasurer and general secretary [in 1994, the general council was composed of the general superior and two general councillors]. With the consent of the general council, the general superior appointed the general secretary and general treasurer.

Rosa de Lima, Marianne, Rosemary, Mary Alice, and I sent the General Chapter 1995 members a reflection paper to help them become more knowledgeable about and to better understand the implications of each of the recommendations.

In looking back, I appreciate the thoughtful, reflective manner in which each of these recommendations were developed. The Task Force gathered information from a variety of knowledgeable sources. Each Task Force member was helped in the group reflection by her considerable knowledge and experience of the subject matter of each of the recommendations. The enlarged general council had the opportunity to support or not support each recommendation, and the general chapter members had information about each recommendation before the General Chapter 1995.



## GENERAL CHAPTER 1995

In preparation of the General Chapter 1995, we worked in close collaboration with two facilitators, Dr. Jean Alvarez and Sr. Nancy Conway, CSJ. We tried to integrate general chapter preparation with the ongoing life of the Institute. With guidance from Jean and Nancy, we invited the whole Institute to prepare for the chapter by reflecting on the same Scripture passage (Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11), and by examining our lives in light of the Mission Statement during an Advent Retreat Day in December 1993. Thus, the total Institute participated in setting the focus and agenda of the General Chapter 1995.

Of the Institute 74.6% responded to the questions of the Advent Reflection Day. The questions centered on our 'Prouds' and our 'Sorries.' The strongest lines of convergence of our Prouds were: As individuals, we were generally hearing and responding well to promoting/defending the life and dignity of all and the needs of our time. We were generally proud of our province/vice-province/region for hearing and responding to meeting a range of societal needs and developing One Body for Mission. As individuals, we were generally missing/ignoring/resisting transformation of our living in community, witnessing in community. We were generally disappointed that our province/vice-province/region was missing/ignoring/resisting: risk of deeper insertion in the realities of the Church and world today.

Based on the Advent Day Reflection Responses the enlarged general council agreed at its meeting in 1994 that the General Chapter 1995 would explore the theme: Moving Forward with Implementing the Mission Statement: Called to be Community (Mission Statement, paragraph 3).

In preparation for the general chapter, each province/vice-province/region reflected on factors which build-up or tear-down community on every level. If we are called to community, what is community in today's world – a world of exclusion, domination and manipulation, in which quality relationships are lacking? How are structures on every level helping/hindering us in becoming community? In Province, Vice-Province, and Region Reports, issues of community were examined in the larger culture and divisions of society were identified: breakdown of family life and neighborhoods, alienation of the human person, isolation, and exclusion. We realized that we needed to redeem the value of community for our contemporary world.

According to the Statistical Report presented to the General Chapter 1995 by Sr. Mary Alice Young, General Secretary, the Institute numbered 1145, of which 18 were in First Vows, in December 31, 1994. We had five provinces, one vice-province, one region, and the general level, with a membership of:

Brazilian Province:	147
Eastern American Province:	274
English-Irish Province:	173
Portuguese Province:	396
Western American Province:	97
French Vice-Province:	31
Region of Mozambique:	22
General Level:	5

Despite fewer members Institute-wide, there were signs of new life throughout the Institute when we came together as a Chapter in July 1995. This was particularly true in Africa. Since the General Chapter 1990, several young women had been professed in

the Region of Mozambique, and we had professed new members in Zambia and Zimbabwe as well. One of the great challenges we faced was having a sufficient number of professed sisters in local RSHM communities in Mozambique, Zambia, and Zimbabwe to support new life and assist in their initial formation. The Institute in Africa could find itself in a situation where those in initial formation outnumber the perpetually professed sisters. The Institute was being called to a new phase of life among us.

Sr. Rosemary, General Treasurer, planted the seeds of an Africa Fund in her Financial Report for the purpose of supporting our mission in Africa. Her message was that we continue to share financial resources with one another, and she linked economic realities in Africa and our Mission Statement's focus on justice.

The General Chapter 1995 sought to address these two realities/needs and committed the Institute to this action step:

2.2 We commit ourselves to the development and sharing of human and financial resources in order to nourish and strengthen new life in our works and ministries. We recognize that at this time, Africa is a place where new life for the whole Institute is emerging, but where human and financial resources are lacking for ministry as well as for community. We therefore ask the General Council:

- To encourage sisters to consider a commitment in mission there
- To establish a Fund for Africa at the general level

The general chapter was sensitive to our being part of a world "in which grave forms of injustice destroy relationships among peoples, races and cultures," and we committed ourselves

as an Institute “to transform all our relationships, so that they are characterized by the spirit of reciprocity, and contradict relations of dominance in our world.”

“Aware of the interdependence of all creation and of the global impact that our way of living locally has on the quality of peoples’ lives,” the general chapter also committed us “to be socially responsible in our use of the goods of the earth, our use of financial resources and our financial investments” (General Chapter 1995). Action steps were identified on the individual, local, and province levels as means to do this.

Seeds planted at the Chapter sought “to build links across continents and to better utilize our potential as Institute in the service of those most in need of justice” (General Chapter 1995 Document). This would in time grow into the Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation Network (JPIC).

The general chapter, in considering how the structure of general government can best serve mission, made three modifications:

- Increase the general council from three sisters to five, two of whom will be subsequently appointed general secretary and general treasurer
- Lengthen the term of office of the general council from five years to six years
- Defer by four months the moment when the newly elected council takes office

As a result of the reflection that the Institute had undertaken since the General Chapter 1990 on Leadership and the preparation in every province/vice-province/region for sisters to be

elected at the general chapter to the general level, the election process went smoothly. There was great openness, honesty and trust throughout the process. We had grown.

Catherine Dolan (EIP) was elected general superior, and Rosa de Lima Pereira (B), Marianne Murray (EIP), Rosa do Carmo Sampaio (P), and Veronica Brand (EAP: Zimbabwe) were each elected general councillor. Of these four general councillors, one was to be named by the General Superior to serve as general secretary and one was to be named to serve as general treasurer, with each one having the appropriate help for her role.

After hearing from the outgoing and the newly elected general councils, the general chapter determined that the newly elected general council would take office on November 21, 1995, the Feast of the Presentation of Mary.

### **LAST MONTHS**

The General Chapter 1995 voted that the newly elected general council would take office four months from the end of the general chapter. This time of transition was appreciated by all of us.

The General Chapter 1995 ended on July 20, 1995. On August 4, 1995, I wrote to our sisters in Zambia and Zimbabwe and announced that, with the consent of the general council and in consultation with the enlarged general council, the decision was made to establish a region for Zambia and Zimbabwe, effective January 6, 1996, the Feast of the Epiphany. In the following months the highest priority was the appointment of a regional superior, and I invited our sisters in Zambia and Zimbabwe to participate in a consultation for the appointment of the regional superior.

Included with my letter to our sisters in Zambia and Zimbabwe was the list of eleven sisters, who in dialogue with Sr. Catherine Dolan, Provincial of the English-Irish Province, and Sr. Martina Crowley, Provincial of the Eastern American Province, had expressed their commitment to be members of the future Zambia-Zimbabwe Region.

On August 15, 1995, I was happy to announce to the Institute the wonderful news of the decision to establish a region for Zambia and Zimbabwe. In November 1995, I was in dialogue with those who were suggested as regional superior, and I consulted with Catherine Dolan, the new general superior, about the appointment of the regional superior. The regional superior's term was to begin on January 6, 1996, when the new region would be formally established during the Inter-Africa Assembly.

From a small group of sisters in Zambia and Zimbabwe, the General Chapter 1995 elected Veronica Brand (EAP: Zimbabwe) to the general council. Fidelma Keaney (EAP: Zimbabwe) died unexpectedly in Harare on September 19, 1995. She was the first RSHM to be buried in Zimbabwe and Zambia. Thus, our small number there became even smaller. Indeed we were fragile, but the faith of our sisters in Zambia and Zimbabwe was very strong.

The newly elected general council began their term of office on November 21, 1995, the Feast of the Presentation of Mary. Catherine Dolan, newly elected general superior, Veronica Brand, and Rosa do Carmo Sampaio arrived at the Generalate the week of November 13, 1995. Rosa de Lima Pereira, who was completing her first term as general councillor, was already at the Generalate, and Marianne Murray, who also was completing her first term as general councillor, was in Belfast.

Joint meetings took place with the outgoing team sharing their experiences with the incoming team and pointing out areas that needed particular follow-up. From my perspective, it was a smooth transition to the new General superior and general council. A special prayer service took place at the Generalate on November 21, 1995 to mark the transfer of authority between the outgoing and incoming general councils.





## AN OVERVIEW

### CHURCH

1985-1995

We say in our Constitutions that we are in the Church for the life of the world, that “Our religious consecration draws us at the deepest level of our being into the dynamism and holiness of the Church.” (RSHM Constitutions 10)

#### *Inserted in the Realities of the Church*

The General Chapter 1985 Document states that our “evangelizing mission challenges us to be more fully inserted in the life of the Church.” The Mission Statement expresses this same dynamism as becoming “more deeply inserted in the realities of the Church and world.” During 1985-1995, the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary continued to place the Institute charism at the service of the Church at local and diocesan levels, and in Vatican Congregations. RSHM participated actively in international and national conferences of religious, in inter-congregational formation programs, were actively involved in implementing diocesan priorities, particularly in advocacy and actions for justice.

RSHM participated in the development of pastoral statements, statements of the Vatican Congregation for Catholic Education, the Lineamenta of the Synod on Consecrated Life (1994). Sr. Mary Milligan (WAP) was a theological expert at the Bishops’ Synod on the Laity (1987). Sr. Marjorie Keenan (EAP) worked in the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, and Sr. Bridget Mary Fitzgerald (EAP) worked in the Sacred Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes (then SCRIS). RSHM were a

Church presence in unchurched parts of the world, collaborated in interfaith and ecumenical endeavours, were greatly involved with Ecclesial Base Communities, local parishes, various forms of pastoral ministry, and in sponsoring various Catholic educational centers and institutions. Local communities were a visible sign of Church presence.

*Pope John Paul II (Now Saint John Paul II)*

Our Pope during 1985-1995 was Pope John Paul II. People have different opinions about his legacy. Some think of his papacy as centralizing Church power, silencing some well-respected theologians, and not dealing effectively with clerical child abuse. Others think of his missionary spirit and numerous travels throughout the world, his actions in support of inter-faith understanding and ecumenism, and his strong opposition to communism, particularly in Eastern Europe.

I ask myself, "How did his Pontificate influence the Institute?" The first thing that comes to mind is that he was present especially to the poorest, a pastor who visited God's people throughout the world. His visits were televised, and we could see him bringing a pastor's love and concern to people far from the center of attention. I remember visiting Mozambique with Bernadette McNamara at a difficult time in the country's history, and our visit followed shortly after a visit of Pope John Paul II. When we arrived, a number of people were wearing capulanas made especially for his visit and were still chanting, "John Paul II, we love you." I experienced the hope that his visits inspired in the lives of the powerless and the oppressed, those experiencing

famine, war, and disease, who were tremendously burdened by international debt.

He promoted Ecumenism and an ecumenical spirit. Some of us from the Generalate were in Assisi in 1986, when he assembled leaders of world religions to pray for peace. Another such gathering occurred in Assisi in 1993, and members of our Generalate Community were there for the World Prayer for Peace. In 1986, he visited the Jewish Synagogue of Rome. Pope John Paul II, by his words and actions, gave support and encouragement to ecumenical work. His encyclical, *Ut Unum Sint*, in which he called for the promotion of interreligious dialogue and collaboration, was very important. Our sisters involved in ecumenical work were especially encouraged by Pope John Paul II.

He was among the key forces that brought about the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe. Living in Rome, I remember so well the news reports of the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989. Then gradually one country after another in Eastern Europe cast off the yoke of domination by the Soviet Union and the world witnessed the collapse of the USSR. Every night on the Italian television channel Rai Uno, we would hear news of a major political development in Eastern Europe or see Pope John Paul II meet with such diverse political figures as General Jaruzelski, Mikhail Gorbachev, or Ronald Reagan. I felt it was unfortunate that he did not have a listening ear to dialogue with those who were speaking and writing about the theology of liberation in countries outside of Europe. His great strength in one part of the world had a 'shadow side' in another.

He met a few times during those ten years with the International Union of Superiors General (UISG). At the time he

was facing health challenges. It was said he never fully recovered from the assassin's bullets which struck him in 1981. In the early 1990s, we would hear that he had fallen in the papal apartment. After one fall he needed to use a cane, and I remember during an audience his taking the cane, raising it, and shaking it, seemingly in frustration. Once, I remember his asking members of the UISG to pray for him. That day, in particular, the humanity of this once vigorous, vibrant man was evident in and through his weakness and limitations.

## SOME CHURCH EVENTS

1985-1995

March 15, 1987 – A Marian Year, Pope John Paul II published encyclical, *Redemptoris Mater*, developing Marian teachings for a Pilgrim Church.

December 1987 – Pope John Paul II published encyclical, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, he identifies structures of sin (i.e. international debt) and the need to build just structures – structures of grace (i.e. debt forgiveness). Pope John Paul II names injustices in the world and writes of the urgent need to work to eliminate unjust structures and to work to build structures of grace.

December 7, 1990 – Pope John Paul II published encyclical, *Redemptoris Missio*, inviting the Church to renew her missionary commitment.

October 1992 – The Fourth General Conference of Latin American Bishops in Santo Domingo. An attempt to halt the direction

of previous General Conferences of Latin American Bishops at Puebla and Medellin does not prevail.

April 1994 – The African Synod. This Synod of Bishops identified the great challenges and urgent calls of the Church in Africa.

October 1994 – The Synod on Consecrated Life, which focused on the essence of consecrated life and its Mission in the Church and in the World.

November 10, 1994 – Pope John Paul II released apostolic exhortation, *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*. He calls the Church to prepare for the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000.

March 30, 1995 – Pope John Paul II published encyclical, *Evangelium Vitae*, calling for “the Gospel of life” to overcome a growing “culture of death.”

May 25, 1995 – Pope John Paul II published encyclical, *Ut Unum Sint*. He writes of developments in Ecumenism and describes the fruits of dialogue.

## ROME

1985-1995

For some, Rome and the Vatican are synonymous, and the Vatican can conjure up in one’s mind the image of the Church’s male hierarchy. From 1985-1995, the Vatican was not especially known for its spirit of dialogue and collaboration, and I realize that for some this can create certain negative feelings about Rome. While the Vatican is within the city of Rome, they are not the same. I experienced a great richness in having our Generalate in Rome.

Rome is a global city, and I believe being in Rome facilitated those of us at the general level having a global perspective on the world, the Church, and developments in religious life. Our horizons were broadened by our membership in a number of international groups, and we were able to participate in a number of seminars, conferences, and assemblies of these groups. The networks to which we belonged kept the Institute present in international gatherings of various language groups. There was a great deal of giving and receiving. We gave what we had experienced in our provinces, vice-province, and region, and the Institute, and we received the latest perspectives on global issues, the Church, and religious life.

Meetings in different language groups added great richness. These groups included: the International Union of Superiors General (UISG), the Justice, Peace, and Integrity Commission of the UISG, Service of Documentation and Education in Global Mission (SEDOS), Africa Faith and Justice Network/Europe, international religious congregations involved in education (EDUC), and the Brazilian Religious in Rome (RBR). Rosemary Lenehan was very active in the Association of General Treasurers and Mary Alice Young was active in meetings of general secretaries.

Our participation in such groups helped us to stay *au courant* of contemporary issues of religious life, to build relationships with other congregational leaders, and to be involved in the preparation and implementation processes of Synods. We were able to express the solidarity of the Institute with religious congregations in times of crisis and after suffering an enormous tragedy.

Our lives were very much enriched and supported by our RSHM communities in Rome. We met during the year to celebrate significant Institute feasts, Jubilees, the Centenary of the Death of Gailhac, and other important moments. We had wonderful celebrations. A highlight of each year was a pilgrimage to a Marian shrine, planned and organized by Srs. Celestine Swoboda (EAP) and John Bosco Gorla (EAP). All of us in Rome would begin the day with the Celebration of the Eucharist at Nomentana, then travel in a caravan of cars to the shrine. Once there, we would learn the history of the shrine, pray together, and on the way back to Rome, stop for a delicious dinner. These times shared together were very special.

It is difficult to find words to adequately express how important the contribution of each one at the Generalate was to the creation of our local community and the support we gave one another. Coming from different provinces, vice-province and region and speaking different languages, we were a microcosm of the whole Institute. We were happy to welcome our sisters, families, and friends who visited Rome for meetings, sabbaticals, and stopovers, and to host Institute international meetings. We received much at these special times.

## **NORTHERN IRELAND**

1985-1995

The conflict in Northern Ireland continued during 1985-1995. Acts of violence occurred with frequency on both sides, and our visits to Rathmore in Belfast and to Lisburn brought home to us how very difficult and painful the situation was for all sides. Here is not the

place to recall the political history of those years or the actions of paramilitary groups. I feel it needs to be remembered, however, that our sisters in Rathmore Grammar School and the Rathmore and Lisburn communities lived through very difficult times with great grace and courage.

**CONSULTATION PROCESS FOR APPOINTMENT OF  
PROVINCIAL/VICE-PROVINCIAL/REGIONAL  
1985-1995**

Beginning in late December 1985, Maria Lúcia, Bernadette, and I initiated a new process for consulting with sisters in the appointment of a provincial/vice-provincial/regional. At least one of us on the general council was present in each province/vice-province/region to personally invite all the sisters to communal discernment, “to participate actively in caring for the good and the unity of the whole body and in discerning God’s will” (RSHM Constitutions 25). The process called all of us to co-responsibility and provided a structure to exercise that co-responsibility.

We wanted to promote a contemplative spirit in communal listening to God revealed in our midst and in our history. Every single sister’s voice was important, and it was important to hear what each one was saying, to share with one another, and to search together for who was being called to lead the province/vice-province/region at that particular historical moment. We spoke of the reciprocity that was needed between the sisters and the provincial/vice-provincial/regional. In order to lead, she would need the support and collaboration of the sisters, and we believed



that in and through the process we were building-in acceptance and support for the sister appointed.

The process called for communal discernment of who was being called to serve in light of the particular needs of the province/vice-province/region over the next three to six years and provided opportunities for sisters to participate in identifying the greatest needs of the province/vice-province/region at the time. Then, at another moment, small groups met to surface names of those who had the qualities needed to respond to the greatest needs of the province/vice-province/region at that particular time. Each sister suggested was invited to listen to what was being said about her in the communal discernment and to discern personally about going forward in the process.

After sharing with a sister suggested the level of support she received and the reasons given in suggesting her, I found it tremendously valuable to be in personal dialogue with her about whether or not she would be open to having her name go forward in the next step of the process. Along with her personal discernment, listening to the communal discernment was a very important consideration. The consultation process left one tremendously vulnerable, and it called for a great deal of honesty, courage, and trust. It was living out what we say in our Constitutions: "This discernment calls us to identify with Christ in his self-emptying by yielding our personal preference to the needs of the Institute." (RSHM Constitutions 25)

So many times over the years I have been asked by members of other congregations how we elect our provincials. I then explain that we do not elect, that the general superior appoints the provincial after consultation with the sisters of the province.

Some people have been surprised by my response, some amazed by it, but I found that the General Council's presence in a province/vice-province/region to invite personally each sister to participate in communal discernment, the participation of each sister in communal discernment, and the dialogue of the general superior with sisters suggested worked well for us.

The provincial/vice-provincial/regional level in our Institute is so important, and we, as general council, felt that the time and energy given to the consultation process for the appointment of a provincial/vice-provincial/regional was one of the most important things that we did, as general council. In addition to leading one's province/vice-province/region, she is a member of the enlarged general council and has a great responsibility to work with the general council in planning and in making recommendations which affect the entire Institute.

The enlarged general council had a tremendous role in the Institute during my ten years at the general level. How very blessed we were to be able to work with each of the provincials, vice-provincials, and regional and with the enlarged general council as a whole! Without their support, we could not have moved forward as we did with planning, with formation, sharing resources, and restructuring the Institute. Their leadership in their province/vice-province/region was certainly important there, and, as well, it contributed in a significant way to the whole – to being One Body for Mission.

## ENLARGED GENERAL COUNCIL

1985-1995

The enlarged general council played a very significant role in the Institute from 1985-1995. The sharing that took place and the relationships that were strengthened during enlarged general council meetings made greater communication, collaboration, and mutual trust possible, and provided the general level with crucial advice and support. Implementing general chapter decisions, responding to developments in particular parts of the Institute, and taking risks happened thanks to the support and collaboration of the provincials, vice-provincial, and regional.

Enlarged general council meetings were held annually from 1985-1990. In July 1990, while in Rome for the general chapter, the general council recommended to the provincials/vice-provincial/regional that the frequency of enlarged general council meetings be changed from meeting every 12 months to meeting every 15 months. This gave everyone a longer time to follow-up one enlarged general council meeting before it was time to prepare for another. It cut down on travel expenses of members of the enlarged general council and on necessary support staff. Members of the enlarged general council agreed.

Meetings were held in different parts of the Institute, and this gave provincials, vice-provincial, and regional, the general council, general treasurer, and general secretary the opportunity to be present in a province and the vice-province, to visit sisters locally and see ministries, and it offered sisters in the host province and vice-province the opportunity to meet and get to know members of the enlarged general council.

The enlarged general council meetings from 1985-1995 dealt with important and challenging topics. The themes, places, and some agenda items of each meeting were:

August 3-13, 1986, Belo Horizonte, Brazil – “Directing our Corporate Response for the Future:” Coopers & Lybrand presented the Analysis of the Self-Study. The meeting focused on gaining a deep understanding of our reality as Institute and the issues we faced, including meeting the expenses of the Planning Process. Goals were set for the next step of the Congregational Planning process.

July 27-August 7, 1987, Braga, Portugal – “Collaboration:” The enlarged general council considered the structure of the French Province, coordination of Inter-Africa, and structures to deal with Institute Planning. It reviewed the progress of the Corporate Reflection Process, agreed to create the Task Force on Sharing Resources.

July 19-30, 1988, Los Angeles, California – “Building Our Tomorrow:” Mid-way between two general chapters, the enlarged general council considered the establishment of the French Vice-Province, agreed to create the Initial Formation Task Force, and received the first draft of the Mission Statement.

July 19-30, 1989, Mont Rouge, France – “Celebrating Life:” Opening of the Centenary Year marking the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the death of Father Gailhac; ratification of the Mission Statement, recommendations of the Task Force on Sharing Resources; recommendations for the General Chapter 1990.

October 19-30, 1991, White Plains, New York – “Implementation of the General Chapter 1990:” implementation of the Mission Statement: use and effectiveness of Criteria for Ministry; Ongoing Formation and plans for Ongoing Formation Task Force; seeds planted for a new governmental structure in Africa; pledge made to contribute to the construction of addition to novitiate house in Mozambique.

January 14-28, 1993, Dublin, Ireland – “Implementation of the Mission Statement:” Mid-way between two general chapters; province/vice-province/region evaluations of the implementation of the Mission Statement; Experience of Internationality for Newer Members; implementation of Ongoing Formation Guidelines; structures in Africa; structures of General Government.

April 14-28, 1994, Belo Horizonte, Brazil – “Building up the Body for Greater Effectiveness in Mission:” issue of Leadership; setting a focus and theme of General Chapter 1995 based on Advent Reflection 1993; recommendations of General Government Task Force; preparation for General Chapter 1995.

Sr. Rosemary Lenehan, gave a financial report at each enlarged general council meeting. She presented the purpose, income, and balance of each fund administered at the general level.

In addition to advising the general council, the enlarged general council helped provinces/vice-province/region to move harmoniously in the same direction. Enlarged general council meetings were a means to help the provincials/vice-provincial/regional to be aware of critical issues affecting the entire

Institute, and in and through them, their province/vice-province/region. The enlarged general council's ongoing evaluation of the planning process and the implementation of the Mission Statement were invaluable in moving us forward and sustaining enthusiasm. As the General Chapter 1995 drew near, members of the enlarged general council looked again at questions raised in using the Mission Statement and responded:

- We were better able to correlate the administration of goods and justice.
- With the Criteria for Ministry, each sister was able to evaluate her ministry to move us forward in the direction of mission, and we were able to initiate further collaboration.
- We were able to speak the same language at provincial/vice-provincial/regional chapters and have the same agenda at general chapter.
- We developed a greater sense of being One Body for Mission, grew in unity, and revitalized our sense of Mission.

## **SOURCES OF LIFE**

1985-1995

The years 1985-1995 were a time of great interest in, and work on, our Sources. We are indebted to all those who worked tirelessly and with great enthusiasm to make new material on our Sources available to us and to the public. I cannot think of the Sources during those years without thinking of Sr. Marjorie Keenan (EAP), Sources Coordinator, who came faithfully to the Generalate one

afternoon a week to work on the Sources and coordinate Sources projects Institute-wide and of Sr. John Bosco Gorla (EAP), Institute Archivist, who came faithfully one day a week to organize material in the Generalate Archives. Both Marjorie and John Bosco did this in addition to their full-time ministerial commitments. Marjorie served on the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace and John Bosco served at Istituto Marymount, Via Nomentana, Rome.

How blessed we were to have had members of the Sources Group, Sr. Marjorie Keenan, Mary Milligan (WAP), Kathleen Connell (EAP), and Rosa do Carmo Sampaio (P), working together those years! Srs. Rosa do Carmo and Kathleen Connell would arrive at the Generalate during their vacation from their full-time ministerial responsibilities to do research on the History of the Institute.

In California, Sr. Mary Milligan was writing booklets on the Letters of Gailhac and translating recent works, and in Portugal Sr. Maria Antónia Quinteiro Lopes's study of Gailhac's Christology was published by the Catholic University of Portugal. Other studies were underway in the provinces, i.e. Sr. Máire O'Donnell (EIP) was working with her brother Fr. Christopher O'Donnell, O.Carm., a renowned Mariologist, on the Heart of Mary in Gailhac's writings, and Sr. Margarida Maria Gonçalves (P) was working on publishing a book on our Foundress, Mère St. Jean.

I cannot forget those in the provinces/vice-province/region who were translating Sources material. They were devoted to getting the exact translation and their energy and enthusiasm were contagious. Marjorie once said that "If the Sources of Life has one distinguishing characteristic it is that it represents the sacrifice of the small amount of available time on the part of many:

researchers, writers, translators, typists – and yes, the coordinator.” Thanks to their generosity, dedication, and love of the Institute, we now have historically accurate and faithfully translated material on our Sources. These include:

Letters Series:

- Continue the Work of Jesus Christ
- To Be Other Christs
- To Have the Spirit of Jesus Christ
- Study Jesus Christ
- Follow Jesus Christ

History of the Institute:

- Volume I: *A Journey in Faith and Time, 1849-1869* completed by Rosa do Carmo Sampaio (P) and translated from Portuguese by Mary Milligan, RSHM
- Volume II: *A Journey in Faith and Time, 1869-1878* completed by Kathleen Connell (EAP) and translated into Portuguese by Margarida Maria Gonçalves, RSCM

Itineraries:

- “Even the Stones Speak”
- “It would be Impossible to Tell You,” an account of early visits of Father Gailhac and M. Sainte-Croix Vidal and M. Saint-Felix Maymard to Rome

During 1985-1995, valuable research was also being done on future projects.

These words do not convey the new life that was being infused by using our Sources for workshops, retreats, orientation days at the beginning of a new ministerial year, etc. How fortunate we are to have the Sources material available for us to take up



again and again and share with others, with the possibility that, as Marjorie Keenan had hoped, the Sources of Life may be “a spring whose waters do not fail.” (Is. 58: 11)

## COMMUNICATIONS

1985-1995

A lot happened in communications technology from 1985-1995 that transformed our lives. You can recall with me all that took place in your own local situation. At the Generalate in 1985 we were using typewriters and had one computer. We had no special features such as Viva Voce/speaker capability with the phones, and I remember Maria Lúcia and I would go to the office of Sr. Anne Marie Hill (EAP) at Marymount International School, Rome, to use a speaker phone during the consultation process for the appointment of a provincial. We did not have email in 1986, nor did we have computers.

The latest form of technology at the time was the fax machine. That was cutting edge. Not many places had their own fax machine in the late 1980s, and we did not have a fax machine at the Generalate. In designing the Self-Study, we would be on the phone with Coopers & Lybrand in New York. Then Coopers & Lybrand would fax a draft of the questionnaire to the Coopers & Lybrand office in Rome, and someone from the Generalate would go to the firm's office to pick up the fax. That seems laborious, and indeed it was. In 1986, however, we were amazed at the technology which made it possible to send words from one continent to another across the Atlantic Ocean.

Once when I was in Portugal during a province consultation, I went to the local post office to send a fax to a sister inviting her to personal discernment in a consultation process. I remember how great it was to have the possibility to do this. Our sisters in Mali would need to travel for hours to the Bishop's house to get a phone call, and someone would have to have had to travel hours to give them the message for one of them to come to the Bishop's house to expect a phone call. Our sisters in Chivuna, Zambia had a party line. Communicating with one another was a challenge, but we found ways to do it.

Beginning in October 1988, Mary Alice Young, General Secretary, was very faithful in sending out an issue of "Briefly," the quarterly newsletter from the general level. Articles were on a wide variety of topics, including the Centenary, enlarged general council meetings, visits to provinces/vice-province/region, Task Force Meetings, and feast-day celebrations with sisters of our Roman communities. Photos were interspersed with news, and it was a great means of keeping everyone up-to-date on happenings at the general level.

Postal service could be erratic from Rome and challenging in some parts of the Institute, too. When we had strict deadlines to meet, as with the Corporate Reflection Process or a consultation, the express services of DHL or Federal Express were used. That was expensive, but at the time the only alternative was to send mail by hand with someone going to Rome. Once, I remember, the person carrying the mail put the envelope in the Italian Post. We did not receive it for quite a while.

Verbal and oral communication was an important means of building relationships and strengthening unity among us all.

Thank heaven for our marvelous translators! There were general chapters, enlarged general council meetings, and Task Force Meetings, etc., and all the handouts for each meeting! There were letters to the Institute for Christmas, the 24<sup>th</sup> of February, and the Feast of the Institute, the Briefly newsletter every three months, the Institute Self-Study, Corporate Reflection Process, all the Planning materials, and much more. The skill, generosity, and dedication of our translators to translating the right meaning of written and spoken words were a gift to us all. We were also deeply grateful for the letters we received in response to our letters or to other communication from the Generalate, the personal reflection of a sister to a letter we had written. These were often a source of encouragement and, at times, of challenge.

As I was leaving Rome in 1995, email had started to be used at the Generalate and in provincial/vice-provincial/regional centres. This made it possible to cut down on the considerable time and postal expense of preparing mailings to each local community Institute-wide for Christmas and Feast Days.

Today with the revolution in communications technology, we have come a long way in being able to communicate with one another easily from one part of the world to another, to send a message to a general chapter which the whole Institute can read instantly, to mobilize a global response to an issue of injustice. Each age has had its challenges and breakthroughs in new forms of communications, and as we look back, I think you will agree with me that 1985-1995 was a rich period in that history.

## GLOBAL TRENDS

1985-1995

- Increase of terrorism
- Widening gap of rich and poor
- Globalization of economy
- Increasing awareness of interconnectedness of everything
- Increasing concern for care of the environment
- Growing historical consciousness of the equality of women

## SOME HISTORICAL EVENTS

1985-1995

December 1985	Terrorist attack at Leonardo da Vinci-Fiumicino Airport, Rome
1985 (ongoing)	AIDS Pandemic (highest percentage of people affected were in Sub Saharan Africa)
1985 (ongoing)	Violent incidents continue during 'The Troubles' in Northern Ireland
April 1986	Nuclear disaster at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant
December 1987	Robert Mugabe consolidates power and becomes President of Zimbabwe
December 1988	Brazilian environmentalist Chico Mendes, 44, was shot and killed
December 1988	Bombing of Pan Am Flight over Lockerbie, Scotland

June 1989	Tiananmen Square protests and crack-down in China
November 1989	The fall of the Berlin Wall
November 1989	Murders of Jesuit priests, cook and her daughter at the Central American University in San Salvador, El Salvador
1989-1992	Republics in Eastern Europe break away from the Soviet Union
December 1990	Lech Wałęsa becomes President in Poland
December 1990	Breakthrough in the English Channel Tunnel
1990-1991	The Gulf War
June 1992	United Nations Earth Summit ECO '92 in Rio de Janeiro
Early-1992	Devastating drought in Southern Africa
April 1992	Siege of Sarajevo begins
October 1992	Mozambique Peace Accord signed
October 12, 1992	Celebrations and protests mark the 500 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the arrival of Europeans in North, Central, and Latin America
September 1993	Israeli PLO Peace Accord (Oslo Accord) signed
November 1993	The Maastricht Treaty to create the European Union goes into effect
January 1, 1994	Uprising in Chiapas to galvanize support for political reform in Mexico
April 1994	Genocide begins in Rwanda
April 1994	Nelson Mandela elected president of South Africa
October 1994	Joaquim Chissano elected president of Mozambique
April 1995	Bombing in Oklahoma City

July 1995	Srebrenica Massacre
September 1995	Beijing UN World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace
1995-Jubilee 2000	Mobilized to call for the cancellation of Third World debt by the year 2000

## TRENDS IN INSTITUTE

1985-1995

**Financial situation of Institute:** The major source of income is salaries and pensions of sisters. Most sisters work in RSHM institutions and some government funded works; some communities require subsidizing, and that is expected to increase.

**Cost of health care and social security:** The cost of health care increases and greater increases are projected in the coming years. Lay people are hired with greater frequency to help with care of the retired and infirm.

**Property situations:** Some properties undergo transformations for care of the elderly and for new works. Sisters live in communities connected to schools, but as we withdraw from or close institutions, housing needs will increase.

**Province relationship to institutions changing:** There is a withdrawal from some corporate apostolates/ministries. In some places, assets are transformed for a new ministry rather than property sold when a work is closed. Patrimony is transformed; previously only institutions were considered corporate ministries. There are new ways of giving expression to corporate ministry and movement toward new corporate ventures; identity is expressed through mission.

**Presence of General Council increases in provinces/vice-province/region:** In addition to formal visits, the general council is present at provincial/vice-provincial/regional consultations and chapters; one day during provincial/vice-provincial/regional chapters is set aside for a general council presentation on the role of the general council in the life of the Institute.

**Changes in attitudes toward vocation awareness:** Although Vocation Awareness was a priority at the General Chapter 1985, in some parts of the Institute some of us did not believe enough in us to invite anyone. Since the Initial Formation Meeting of December 1988-January 1989, there is greater interest in Vocation Awareness, dynamism to act.

**Structural changes for Institute:** There is restructuring in parts of the Institute. We experience this in the French Province, the establishment of the French Vice-Province, the process to establish a region for Zambia and Zimbabwe.

**Greater awareness of using inclusive language:** There is greater awareness in using inclusive language in communications and documents.

## SIGNIFICANT PEOPLE

1985-1995

**Dr. Jean Alvarez and Sr. Nancy Conway, CSJ,** were consultants for the Corporate Reflection Process, Mission Statement, preparation and facilitation of General Chapter 1990, preparation and facilitation of General Chapter 1995, Advent Reflection Day December 1993, Leadership issue. Their cultural sensitivity,

creativity, and skilled facilitation, combined with Jean's and Nancy's calm and gracious manner, helped us through difficult moments.

**Dr. Franck de Chambeau** led the Coopers & Lybrand Team of consultants; recommended we have an Institute Self-Study, advised and worked with us in the design of the Self-Study Questionnaire, financial forms, etc., led and directed Coopers & Lybrand Analysis of Self-Study, gave presentation on Self-Study and Coopers & Lybrand Analysis to the enlarged general council in August 1986, led the presentation to each provincial council and the regional on the analysis of its province/region responses to Self-Study.

**Fr. William Hogan, CSC**, helped us with congregational planning, advised us on restructuring French Province to French Vice-Province, the establishment of a novitiate for Zambia and Zimbabwe, the establishment of a region for Zambia and Zimbabwe; advised and facilitated the Enlarged General Meeting in Braga in 1987; advised and facilitated meeting of Zambia/Zimbabwe Study-Group; met with sisters in Zambia and Zimbabwe at Lake Kariba; was with us at General Chapter 1990; advised us about General Government; guided and advised us on canonical matters. In addition to his great knowledge and experience, he had a simplicity that we can remember with fondness. He was like a brother who walked with us in many significant moments of our journey.

**Rev. Peter Hans Kolvenbach, SJ**, Superior General of the Society of Jesus. His presentation to the General Chapter 1990 and the Question and Answer session that followed preceded the Chapter's



consideration of approval of the Mission Statement. He was the right person at the right time.

**Sr. Helen McLaughlin, RSCJ**, General Superior of Society of the Sacred Heart and the RSCJ General Council shared with us from the wealth of their experience in leadership and their knowledge of diverse issues of international congregations; had a valuable role in our confirming the path forward for Congregational Planning; met and reflected with us on significant topics for international congregations of apostolic religious life. Their friendship was a great gift.

## CONCLUSION

I am filled with gratitude as I recall the journey of the Institute during 1985-1995. The high level of participation of every sister stands out in my memory. All of us were engaged in living the questions, a faith community seeking to discern God's call in the new moment. Collaboration was at every turn, in every area. In and through the processes, new life flowed through the whole body. New structures were created. We were revitalized in carrying out Christ's life-giving Mission, in placing ourselves and our resources at the service of those most in need of justice. Tested by challenging situations and difficulty, we proved the Institute to be truly One Body for Mission. In faith we planted seeds in fertile soil that was ready to receive the gift of new life. We lived a *kairos* moment. It was an "acceptable time," and we did not receive the grace of God in vain.

Los Angeles, California

September 2016



## APPENDICES

1. Letter to Institute Announcing Establishment of French Vice-Province, July 1, 1988 – Sr. Patricia Connor, RSHM
2. Map of RSCM/RSHM Institute in Africa 1985-1995
3. Mission Statement, General Chapter 1990
4. Process of Discernment on Choice and Evaluation of Ministry (Process Referred to in General Chapter 1990 Text)
5. Experience of Internationality for the Newer Members, Message to All the Sisters of the Institute, Braga, June 29, 1993
6. Eastern American Provincial Council and English-Irish Provincial Council support the establishment of a Region comprising the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary in Zambia and Zimbabwe, June 1995
7. Decision of General Council to establish a region for Zambia and Zimbabwe, June 16, 1995

**APPENDIX 1: LETTER TO INSTITUTE ANNOUNCING ESTABLISHMENT  
OF FRENCH VICE-PROVINCE, JULY 1, 1988,  
SISTER PATRICIA CONNOR, RSHM**



**RELIGIOSE DEL SACRO CUORE DI MARIA  
CURIA GENERALIZIA  
VIA ADELAIDE RISTORI, 26 - 00197 ROMA, ITALIA  
TEL. 81.19.698**

July 1, 1988

Dear Sisters,

I want to write to you today to share with you some information concerning the structure of the French Province. This touches directly the life of a part of the Institute and indirectly the life of us all.

From previous communication you have received during the past two years, you are aware that the structure of the French Province has been a subject of serious reflection and in-depth study by the French Province and the General Council. During the 1987 Enlarged General Council Meeting, the recommendation made by the French Province, the possibility of a change from the status of Province to that of Vice-Province, was affirmed. (cf. Bulletin of 1987 EGC Meeting, Braga, Portugal, p.18).

In September 1987, we, as General Council, began the follow-up of this recommendation. Our attention focused initially on the possible collaborating province. After weighing a number

of factors, in November 1987 we entered into dialogue with the English/Irish Province and invited all sisters to participate in a province "sounding" on the possibility of establishing a formal, collaborative relationship between the French Vice-Province and the English/Irish Province. We were grateful for their openness and willingness to cooperate fully in this "sounding".

Communication and dialogue were enhanced by the presence of the French provincial, Marguerite-Marie Lyng, and of Bernadette McNamara, from the General Council, in England and Ireland during the EIP "sounding". A lot of information was gathered and a lot of questions were raised. Despite not knowing all the answers to the questions, the general sense of the English/Irish Province was to go ahead and to study further the implications of such a collaborative relationship.

Meanwhile, the sisters of the French Province were also coming together to reflect more deeply on the implications of becoming a Vice-Province and of entering into a formal relationship with the English/Irish Province. Communication and dialogue were facilitated by the presence in France of an EIP councillor, Mary Lamble, during these meetings of the French Province.

In April 1988 an "ad hoc" group, consisting of two representatives from each province and of a representative from the general level, was established to study further the implications of the new structure. The objective was to work out

details in specific areas and, in dialogue with both provincial councils and the general council, arrive at an acceptable agreement.

Today, after months of prayerful reflection, study, and dialogue, I wish to announce the establishment of the French Vice-Province and the establishment of a formal, collaborative structure with the English/Irish Province.

I do not want, at this time, to share with you any of the specific details of what is involved in this new structure. That information can come at another time.

I feel it is important for you to know that this new structure offers to the sisters of the French Vice-Province many possibilities for new life in the midst of their present reality. It challenges us in many ways that can be very life-giving. It provides a vehicle for continuing to enlarge our horizons, to recommit ourselves to the value of internationality, and to discover anew the richness of the gift of internationality.

In closing, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the deep faith that I have experienced and have touched in working with the sisters of our French Province and our English/Irish Province on this important question. I applaud their openness to risk, their willingness to venture into the unknown, and their readiness to go forward in faith. Let us accompany them with our prayer, as they embark upon this new beginning!

Within the next two weeks, we will be travelling to Los Angeles for the meeting of the Enlarged General Council. Please continue to keep us in your prayer, that we may be ever sensitive to recognizing God's way among us and ever open to responding to God's continual call.

Love and best wishes,

*Petrus Cunniff.*  
PC/M

**APPENDIX 2: MAP OF RSCM/RSHM INSTITUTE IN AFRICA, 1985-1995**





## APPENDIX 3: MISSION STATEMENT, GENERAL CHAPTER 1990

### RELIGIOUS OF THE SACRED HEART OF MARY

#### MISSION STATEMENT

#### **“That All May Have Life”**

We, the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary, an international apostolic institute of women religious, are called to share in the life-giving mission of Jesus Christ.

The challenge of the gospel and the spirit of faith and zeal which marked our founders, Jean Gailhac and Mère St. Jean, and our founding sisters, urge us to respond to the needs of our time and to work with others in action for evangelical justice. Sent to promote the life and dignity of all our sisters and brothers, at this time we place ourselves and our resources at the service of those who are most in need of justice, enabling the powerless, the deprived, the marginalized, the voiceless to work effectively for their own development and liberation.

We are called to be community, to know and celebrate God's love for us and to make that love known to others. As we become more deeply inserted in the realities of the Church and world, we use our individual and corporate talents to work creatively in diverse ministries for the promotion of justice.

Mary is our model as we seek to be open to the Spirit, to center our lives in Jesus Christ, to be women of prayer and compassion, and to give authentic and joyful witness to the values of the gospel wherever we are.

## APPENDIX 4: PROCESS OF DISCERNMENT ON CHOICE AND EVALUATION OF MINISTRY

(Process Referred to in General Chapter 1990 Text)

### PROCESS OF DISCERNMENT ON CHOICE AND EVALUATION OF MINISTRY

When choosing or evaluating ministries, the Institute Criteria for Ministry should be used in the process of discernment on choice and evaluation of ministry.

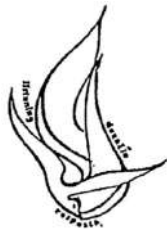
Ministry, corporate or individual, should be chosen and evaluated through a process which includes:

1. REFLECTION ON THE CONSTITUTIONS AND MISSION STATEMENT
2. REFLECTION ON THE INSITUTE CRITERIA FOR MINISTRY
  1. Does this ministry allow collaboration with others in building up the Reign of God?
  2. Does this ministry allow work with and/or on behalf of those most in need of justice?
  3. Does this ministry enable those most in need of Justice to work for their own development and liberation?
  4. Does this ministry respond to the needs of our time?
  5. Does this ministry give the opportunity for insertion in the realities of the Church and world?
  6. Does this ministry give the opportunity to build up community, giving authentic witness to the gospel?

3. CONSIDERATION OF RESOURCES IN THE CARRYING OUT OF OUR DIRECTION IN MISSION
  - a. talents, capabilities, personal call of the sister(s)
  - b. possibility of remuneration
  - c. human and financial resources of the province/vice-province/region
4. DISCERNMENT BY SISTER(S)
  - a. personally (prayer, reflection, counsel)
  - b. with local community and other RSHM
  - c. with provincial level
  - d. the dialogue with the people of the local area/church

REVISED  
SEPTEMBER 1989

## APPENDIX 5: EXPERIENCE OF INTERNATIONALITY



### Experience of Internationality for the Newer Members

#### Message to all the Sisters of the Institute

We, the RSHM who participated in the Experience of Internationality, want to share something of our experience with all of our Sisters.

We drank from a WELL by reconnecting to and deepening our RSHM historical roots, “the specific gift of the Spirit given to P. Jean Gailhac, M. St. Jean and our first Sisters,” (Cons. 4) and by sharing the realities we had lived in various cultures. We rediscovered our TREASURE (Mt 13:44).

Through this experience of internationality, of unity in diversity and through the witness of many of our Sisters today, we have been renewed in our identity and commitment.

Challenged by our lived experience, we recognize that internationality is a gift for the Institute, the Church, and the world. We want to keep this gift alive in us and to share it in an attitude of co-responsibility and collaboration.

As members of One Body for Mission, we commit ourselves:

- to be energized by Faith and Zeal
- to be strengthened by prayer and discernment
- to be centered in Jesus Christ, entering into the Paschal Mystery,

in order to grow in the quality of our personal and community life.

We are willing to take the risk to be women without boundaries, always looking for new alternatives to promote life.

Challenged by the Gospel, our Constitutions and Mission Statement, we struggle to live what we proclaim.

Energized by the prophetic dimension of our Charism, we want to reveal the “face” of the RSHM, witnessing and communicating our Spirit “THAT ALL MAY HAVE LIFE.”

Braga, June 29, 1993

**APPENDIX 6: EASTERN AMERICAN PROVINCIAL COUNCIL AND  
ENGLISH-IRISH PROVINCIAL COUNCIL SUPPORT THE ESTABLISHMENT  
OF A REGION COMPRISING THE RELIGIOUS OF THE SACRED HEART OF  
MARY IN ZAMBIA AND ZIMBABWE, JUNE 1995**

As Provincial Councils of the Eastern American and English/Irish Provinces, we support the establishment of a Region by the General Council, comprising the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary in Zambia and Zimbabwe, relating to the General Superior and her Council, in conjunction with the Eastern American Province and the English/Irish Province.

We have reached this conclusion believing that establishing a Region would strengthen our effectiveness in mission, and following on:

1. The research, consultation, meetings and prayerful reflection of the sisters living in Zambia and Zimbabwe, through which they came to recognise more fully
  - the need to deepen our experience that we are one body for mission within an international Institute;
  - the need to strengthen our ability to act as such, in Africa in particular;
  - the need to intensify efforts in collaboration between Zambia and Zimbabwe, especially vis-à-vis ministry, community, novitiate, vocation awareness, human resources, ongoing formation for mission, work for justice (c.f. General Chapter 1990 document)

2. The unanimous decision on the part of the sisters in Zambia and Zimbabwe to go forward with the Region to enable greater possibilities for mission (Meeting in Kariba, January 1995).
3. The visit of Sisters Martina and Catherine to Zimbabwe and Zambia during which ten sisters committed themselves to becoming members of the Region, knowing that concerns and practicalities need to be worked out, but willing to take this step in faith.
4. Reflection and discussion on the part of each of the Provincial Councils separately and in dialogue.

Although the number of sisters open to serving in the Region, other than those already in Zambia and Zimbabwe, is limited, we see the possibility of continuity for the foreseeable future, trusting that in the long term there will be Zambian and Zimbabwean sisters to embody our charism and carry out our mission in the Region.

Provincial Council  
Eastern American Province:

*St. Martina Crowley*  
*Letizia Paffalardo RSHM*  
*Edna O'Connor RSHM*

Date: *June 6, 1995*

Provincial Council  
English/Irish Province:

*Catherine Dolan RSHM*  
*Margaret Fielding RSHM*  
*Maria Lever RSHM*

Date: *2 June 1995*

**APPENDIX 7: DECISION OF GENERAL COUNCIL TO ESTABLISH A  
REGION FOR ZAMBIA AND ZIMBABWE, JUNE 16, 1995**



**RELIGIOSE DEL SACRO CUORE DI MARIA  
CURIA GENERALIZIA  
VIA ADELAIDE RISTORI, 26 - 00197 ROMA, ITALIA  
TEL. 81.19.698**

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ZAMBIA/ZIMBABWE REGION

GIVEN that the sisters in Zambia and Zimbabwe  
unanimously support the establishment of a  
region, and

GIVEN the decision of the Provincial Councils of  
the Eastern American and the English/Irish  
Province to support a region, and

GIVEN the endorsement of the Enlarged General  
Council to go ahead,

we, as General Council, have come to the decision  
to establish a region for Zambia and  
Zimbabwe.

We recognize the fragility of the situation, but  
are going ahead in faith, encouraged by the  
support of both Provincial Councils and the  
commitment of sisters to be members of the new  
region.



We believe that the establishment of the Zambia/Zimbabwe Region is going to foster life, lead to the conversion of the total Body, and help us to renew many values of the Institute.

Signed:

*Patricia Connor, RSHM*  
*Rosa de Lima Pereira, RSCM*  
*Marianne Murray RSCM.*

Rome

June 16, 1995

## PHOTOGRAPHIC ADDENDUM



**Maria de Lourdes Machado, Mary Milligan, RSHM General Superiors  
1975-1985 and Patricia Connor, newly elected General Superior  
General Chapter 1985, Rome**



**General Council 1985-1990  
Maria Lúcia Brandão, Patricia Connor, Bernadette McNamara,  
General Chapter 1985, Rome**



**The Generalate Community, Rome, July 1986**



**Patricia Connor and Maria Lúcia Brandão meet with Maria Leonor  
Fernandes, Inter-Africa Coordinator  
Generalate, February, 1986**



**Enlarged General Council  
Belo Horizonte, Brazil, August, 1986**



**Valuable translators: Therezinha Benedicto, Maria do Rosário Durães  
and Mary Jo McElroy  
Belo Horizonte, Brazil, August, 1986**



**Rosemary Lenehan, Olga Georgina and Catherine Dolan with  
Generalate Community enjoying an evening in Rome**



**Second meeting of Planning Liaison Persons  
Generalate, May, 1988**



**Fátima Fernando, Valéria Erneio and Albertina Páscoa José are welcomed into the pre-novitiate in Maputo, Mozambique, October, 1988**



**Bernardo Almazan, Bernadette McNamara and Maria Coronel in Toluca, Mexico, March, 1989**





**Maria Helena Ayres, Margaret Fielding, Genevieve Underwood,  
and Judith Lupo, the Institute Centenary Committee  
meet at the Generalate, 1989**



**RSHM in Rome celebrate the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Mary with a  
pilgrimage to a Marian shrine, 1989**





**Celebration of Patricia Connor's Silver Jubilee  
Adelaide da Cunha, Rosemary Lenehan, Patricia Connor  
and Maria Cândida Valente, Generalate, June, 1989**



**Family of Fr. Gailhac, Monsieur Henri Vidal, and of Mère St. Jean,  
Madame Bernard Couronne, share family remembrances with everyone  
at the enlarged general council meeting, Mont Rouge, France, July, 1989**



**Bernadette McNamara, Maria Lúcia Brandão, Margaret Fielding, Patricia Connor during visit to English-Irish Province, October/November, 1989**



**Maria Lúcia Brandão and Bernadette McNamara with Alcantara Hoy, age 97, in Upminster, England October/November, 1989**



**Bernadette McNamara keeps relationships with sisters strong through written communication, Generalate, Rome**



**Dr. Jean Alvarez and Nancy Conway, CSJ, help us to prepare for the General Chapter 1990**



**Kathleen Connell and Rosa do Carmo Sampaio  
at work on the Sources in the Generalate**



**Patricia Connor, Mary Alice Young, Nicoletta Scotti, Bernadette  
McNamara and Breda Galavan in Rome, 1990**



**RSHM in Rome with Pope John Paul II on occasion of the Centenary of the death of Father Gailhac,**

**January 24, 1990**



**General Council 1990-1995: Marianne Murray, Patricia Connor and Rosa de Lima Pereira**



**Marjorie Keenan working on the Sources in the Generalate**





**Marianne Murray, Patricia Connor, Veronica Brand, Rosa de Lima Pereira, and Marguerite McLoughlin in Rome, May, 1991**



**Edmund Harvey, Marianne Murray and Rosa de Lima Pereira  
Planning ahead for the Ongoing Formation Task Force Meeting**



**Ongoing Formation Task Force members and the Generalate Community see places in Rome visited  
by Fr. Gailliac, M. Ste. Croix and M. St. Félix**

**Maria Leonor Fernandes, Margarida Maria Pinto Coelho and Maria Lúcia Brandão follow itinerary,  
February, 1992**





**Also following the Rome itinerary are Françoise Wyckaert, Edmund Harvey, Breda Shelly and Patricia Connor, February, 1992**



**Rosa de Lima Pereira with Breda Shelly and Victoria Busch in Tarrytown, United States, March, 1993**



**RSHM in Rome on pilgrimage to the Shrine of the Virgin of Praise to celebrate the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Mary, June, 1992**



**Marianne Murray visits with Marie Chantal Colar, Françoise-Thérèse Ringeval, and Jacqueline Blaise in Cambrai, France, May, 1993**



**All involved in the Experience of Internationality for Newer Members, Motherhouse,  
Béziers, June, 1993**



**Margarida Maria Gonçalves (left) and Maria de Lourdes Machado (right), two former General Superiors, with Patricia Connor, Braga, June, 1993**



**Luísa Marinho (right) on the day of her Perpetual Vows,  
Fervença, Portugal, July 4, 1993  
Luísa, Patricia Connor and young people from the Lar of Santa  
Teresinha, Viseu, Portugal**



**Olga Georgina, Olinda Rocha, Veronica Brand, Ana Mó Senguaio, Maria  
Teresa Bastião and Maria Rita Marcelino in Maputo, Mozambique**



**Novitiate for Zambia-Zimbabwe – Seated: Harriet Kunda, Florence Muuka, Mumbe Nzobokela, Coltrida Mooya  
Standing: Virginia McNally and Patricia Butler  
Chinhoyi, Zimbabwe, 1993**



**Maria de Lisieux Silva, Virginia Mullane and Marina Queiroz at enlarged general council meeting in Belo Horizonte, Brazil, April, 1994**





**Patricia Connor and Fr. Bill Hogan, CSC, at meeting of  
Zambia/Zimbabwe Study Group, Generalate, August, 1994**



**Philippa O'Sullivan, Martina Crowley and Moira Lever at  
Zambia/Zimbabwe Study Group Meeting, August, 1994**



**Serafina Helena, Virginia Mullane and Rosa do Carmo Sampaio at a gathering of sisters in Maputo, Mozambique**



**Dr. Jean Alvarez and Nancy Conway, CSJ, plan with the General Team in preparation for the General Chapter 1995  
Seated: Marianne Murray and Rosemary Lenehan**





**Celebrating with Maria Flora Dunguza (center) her Silver Jubilee  
Patricia Connor, Rosa de Lima, Maria Flora Dunguza, Vianney Stewart,  
Evelyn Gill and Margaret Treacy  
Generalate, February 24, 1995**



**Patricia Connor presenting Pope John Paul II with a monetary gift from  
the Institute of the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary,  
The Vatican, January 24, 1990**

*May God be blessed always and in everything.*

Gailhac, Béziers, 23 July 1886

## **BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION**

### **Sister Patricia Connor, RSHM**

Patricia Connor, RSHM was born on May 8, 1941 in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, USA. She knew the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary as a student first at Marymount College, Tarrytown, New York and then at Marymount College in Palos Verdes, California. She entered the RSHM Novitiate in Santa Barbara, California on September 8, 1962 and made her First Profession on August 22, 1964. She graduated from Marymount College in Palos Verdes and earned a Master's Degree in History from California State University, Northridge. She taught in RSHM elementary and secondary schools in Los Angeles, Santa Barbara, and Montebello and served in various capacities for the Western American Province, including Formation Directress, and Provincial Superior from 1976-1982. During this time, she served on the Boards of RSHM Schools, Loyola Marymount University, and Marymount Palos Verdes College, and she was an active member of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious. She was elected General Superior of the Institute at the General Chapter 1985 and served at the General Level from 1985-1995.

Upon returning to California, she was the Program Director of A Place Called Home in South Central Los Angeles from 1997-2003 and a member of the Justice and Peace Commission of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. She served for a second time as Provincial from 2003-2009. She continues to be involved in Board Ministry, and she volunteers in the educational services program at A Place Called Home.

Institute of the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary