

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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PATRICIA CONNOR RSHM

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Publication of the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary



Patricia Connor, RSHM
General Superior 1985-1995

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Key to Initials Used

B	Brazilian Province
EAP	Eastern American Province
EIP	English-Irish Province
F	French Province/French Vice-Province
P	Portuguese Province
WAP	Western American Province
M	Region of Mozambique
Z	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 8th 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 9th 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 10th 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 11th 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

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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 Lenehan, Mary Alice Young, Mary (Marianne) Murray, and Rosa

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Thank you, Margaret McKenna, for generously preparing the layout for the series of photos which help to bring the written text to life.

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I am very grateful to each of you and to all who helped me in so many other ways.

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 Mó 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 100th 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 100th 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 100th 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 100th 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 24th, 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 25th, 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 25th, 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 Mó 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 Lúcia 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 Lúcia and Bernadette was difficult. We had worked together, traveled to parts of the Institute together, carried problems together. Sr. Maria do Rosário Durães (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 Mó 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 Mó Senguaio (M) arrived providentially in Zambia from Mozambique for a sabbatical. Ana Mó, 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 Mó 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 Mó 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 Mó 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 Lenahan, 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 25th Anniversary of their Religious Profession on September 30, 2016, and Sr. Valéria Erneio (M) will celebrate the 25th 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