



Newsletter

Issue 12 - November 2009



“...and some fell on rich ground ...”

... at the first meeting of the enlarged Extended Family Core Group meeting in early October. Here we have the reactions of some of the participants, and elsewhere, the future and an innovation!

Core Group Development

I have to admit that I was a little pessimistic about our *Big Gathering* of the extended Extended Family Core Group at Noddfa. Somehow the planning of it had been fraught with gremlins - difficulties in settling the date, fixing who was to come, how to organize areas and representation - you name it..... In addition, as the 'old' group had struggled in the beginning to get to grips with the task, and come to terms with the vagueness of it, so I felt sorry for the newcomers having grasp it all from scratch. I needn't have worried. The Holy Spirit had it sorted. From the first session and opening prayer, right through the presentations and discussions, it was as if we were guided. The fresh air provided by the new participants is just what we need right now, in fact they seem to have hit the ground running. Not that the 'old guard' have any reason for regret or self-doubt, but new pairs of eyes seem to be seeing new and exciting possibilities. We all need to seize this opportunity, and let the Spirit blow where it will. Who knows....?



Sue Black

What's in a word?

Welcome - something we all want to feel. At Noddfa there is always a warm welcome to everyone from the Sisters which makes you feel special.

Family - we used the term "Extended Family" frequently. This gave me the sense of comfort, support and identity. I welcome the idea of lay people being encouraged to be part of the wider family of the RSHM.

Prayer - Both private and communal prayer is very important to me. Our time of prayer at Noddfa was special and spiritual involving various texts, music and symbols.



"Fan the Flame" - I see this image as the role we all have. To gently keep the light of Christ at the centre of the work of the RSHM alive; to raise awareness, to ask questions and look for answers.

Since the Noddfa weekend Colette Kearney, Ruth Long, Sr. Eleanor and myself have had a meeting to see a way forward. As we are not free for November 13th, we are planning a "Reflection" afternoon on Sunday 29th November at the Sisters house in Seafield. We aim to give a brief history of the order and an input from two lay people who have been involved in work with the RSHM. We will have a time for discussion and, very important, for a cup of tea!!!

Kath Nolan, Liverpool

“That all may have life”

Noddfa Meeting 10th/11th October.

As we gathered in Noddfa for our meeting, we were happy and blessed to have the presence of those who joined us from London, Carlisle and Liverpool for the first time. During our meeting we prayed, reflected and shared on the Charism of Fr Gailhac; and how at this time in our history the SHM Extended Family will enable Fr Gailhac's vision to be more widely known and lived.

We deepened our understanding of our Charism, and of the history and mission of the Institute. We strengthened our belief that the SHM Extended Family is a Gift from God, embracing all those who identify with the spirit of the RSHM and who want "to share in the life giving mission of Jesus Christ".

We emphasised the importance of the SHM EF being inclusive, as together in a spirit of Communion, Collaboration and Exchange of Gifts we promote "the life and dignity of all our sisters and brothers".

There was a strong call to deepen and share Spirituality, and to deepen our relationship for Mutual Enrichment.

We were challenged by our Institute focus on Women and Children, Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation.

The importance of the growth of Extended Family in local areas of the Province was strongly emphasised. This is where we can Reflect, Share and Collaborate on our journey, as we continue the life giving mission of Jesus Christ.

I found our time together Life Giving, Inspirational and Encouraging. It enabled us to "Fan into Flame" the gift of God which is SHM Extended Family, so that "All may have life".

Sr. Kathleen O'Donovan, Upminster



Enlarged Core Group of the SHM Extended Family



The beauty of the surroundings, the warmth of the welcome, the comfort of the accommodation, the delight of the food and the tangible spirit of Noddfa, announced a profitable and worthwhile weekend. Our feelings and hopes may be summed up as follows:

- Renewed enthusiasm for the 'Gailhac story'.
- Desire for the seed-sowing of the Extended Family in our local area.

- Fear of beginning overcome by experience of pioneering groups.
- Marked impression by the gentle yet very strong faith prevalent in the group.
- Strength and sustenance received through celebrations of the Eucharist and periods of reflection.
- Courage given, due to the skills of the Core Group leaders.
- Energy received thanks to the evident spirit of Gailhac in the house, the spirit extended to all who come and share in the charism *'that all may have life'*.

As a result of our weekend we feel encouraged to have an initial Extended Family gathering on 13th November, 2009, the Institute's Extended Family Feastday. This will be for our friends in the West London area, and your prayers for this occasion would be warmly welcomed.

Sr. Aline Leonard, Kathleen O'Neill, Sr André Dullaghan.

"That all may have life"

New Feature!!!

Letters Page

Dear Patrick,

It is a long time since we have been in touch. I follow the events of the Extended Family with interest. Since I now work between Dublin and Rome I don't have much spare time.

In August/Sept. I visited Mozambique, Zambia, with Sr. Cathy Minhoto. If you go to our Generalate web page, click English and then Newsletter, you will see an account of Project monitoring etc. You might like to use some of it. It would be good if we could involve our Extended Family in some fundraising for Africa?

Generalate web address: <http://www.rscm-gen.org>

Best wishes to you and Sue.

Kathleen

RSHM sisters will be well aware of Sr. Kathleen O'Keefe and her work, but for the rest of us, part of her ministry is as Institute Fundraiser for Africa. It was in this capacity that she undertook the monitoring visits mentioned here. Her letter arrived at just the right time, as one of the questions we considered at Noddfa was what activities local EF groups could undertake. Could this be one suggestion? Below is some of the information from the Newsletter on the RSHM web-site, which also includes more pictures and another article on the visit by Sr. Cathy Minhoto.

What's in a Name?

From September 9th until September 22nd, Cathy Minhoto and I truly experienced how as RSHM we are "living the Mission Statement more authentically by sharing our resources, financial and personnel, beyond boundaries of Provinces and Regions" (2007 Gen Chap) in our commitment to women and children in Zambezi and in our commitment to sustainability and succession in the future. In driving, perspiring, laughing and sometimes crying in our journeys from Lusaka to Mutare, I was able, with the help of Breda Shelly (EAP), to monitor all projects funded through Misesan Cara in the Zambezi Region.



Lusaka: **Kalingalinga:** Pre-school for orphans (Umoyo Day Center) - 96 of them!

Choma: **St. Mulumba's School:** Boarding school for 210 hearing-impaired, blind and developmentally disabled children. Project: Electrification of Kitchen.

Arise School - basic school for poor children in a needy area of Choma.

Chivuna: **St. Joseph's School for Girls:** Secondary boarding school serving over 700 girls. Project: water purification utilizing advanced technology. (During a recent cholera outbreak, this was the only school to remain open in Zambia as a result of the purified water system.)

Mutare: **Herbal Centre for Natural Medicine** for HIV+/AIDS patients: this is one section of an integrated Community Care Programme

Personnel Projects: Hospice care/counselling, Hospice outreach programmes, Herbal Project development, teaching, nursing, monitoring of local projects, capacity-building of the Regions

Sr. Kathleen O'Keefe

"That all may have life"

Hope for the Future

The SHM Extended Family Board of the West America Province is excited to share with you some inspiring news from this year's 10th annual RSHM International Network of Schools Conference.

From June 27 - July 2, 2009 the RSHM International Network of Schools Conference, hosted by Colégio de Nossa Senhora do Rosário, in Porto, Portugal, provided the first annual student summit. The summit offered an opportunity for twenty-eight students, representing fourteen RSHM schools from all over the world, to come together and share ways their schools implement the RSHM mission, ***"To know and love God. To make God known and loved. To proclaim that Jesus Christ has come in order that all may have life."***

These twenty-eight young people have confirmed for all of us that the RSHM mission is alive and thriving among 16,000 young people attending RSHM schools all over the world. The following are brief extracts by some of the students, expressing their experiences in Portugal:

The overwhelming sense of a greater community larger than ever imagined struck me most when I met other students like myself from across the world. The RSHM global community truly came to life. We all arrived unsure of what was in store for us: what we would do and what the other students would be like. We spent five days together sharing cultures, touring cities, building leadership skills, learning of our responsibility to the RSHM in the future, sharing experiences from our own schools, playing with underprivileged kids, and struggling to get by not knowing any Portuguese. Surprisingly enough, for all of us, our similarities and differences harmonized to create a cohesive group that by the end of the week had established life-long friendships. It was an experience none of us will forget and though we left with tears



in our eyes fearing that we will never see each other again, we know that we are together, no matter how far apart, we are together in Marymount. *(Luisa de Carteret, Marymount High School, Los Angeles)*

We were able to work on an all day community service project, called Projecto Raiz, helping underprivileged children re-paint a mural. After, we all went to the park

and got to interact with all the children. We enjoyed fun games, delicious food and sang songs we will never forget. For me, that was one of the most memorable events of the trip. I truly enjoyed sharing in the works of the RSHM. I imagine that the joy and satisfaction that I felt when helping at Projecto was the same that was felt by Fr. Gailhac when he served the women and children in Béziers. This day gave us the opportunity ***"To know and love God. To make God known and loved."***

(Zonia Duenas, Cantwell Sacred Heart of Mary High School, Montebello, California)

(Submitted by Becky Ramos, Co-chair WAP EF Board and reproduced with their permission)

Next Issue

With so much enthusiasm expressed at the meeting at Noddfa, it would be good if we could hear about activities around the Province in time for the next Newsletter, especially what you did for 13th November.

☺ It would be even better if the reports came with one or two pictures ☺

The deadline for contributions is 12th March 2010

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Best wishes from the SHM EF Core Group (NEP)

"That all may have life"