



Heart

Winter 2013 A Journal of the Society of the Sacred Heart, United States – Canada



...to Heart

Dear Friends,

As you begin to read this latest edition of *Heart Magazine* I thank you again for the many ways you are connected with the Sacred Heart family and the life and mission of

the Society of the Sacred Heart.

As many of you know, this year the international Society of the Sacred Heart is celebrating the life of Janet Erskine Stuart, RSCJ, one of the Society's most influential educators. In this winter edition of *Heart*, we are happy to share the many ways that Janet Stuart continues to influence the Sacred Heart mission, both in the United States and Canada and beyond our continent. Sister Sue Acheson's creative dialogue with Janet Stuart reminds us that, while Janet lived in the early twentieth century and had this time as the context for her educational philosophy and perspective, her wisdom and insight have tremendous influence on the way Religious of the Sacred Heart and those who are their colleagues and associates live out the Sacred Heart educational mission or, colloquially said, "do education" in a variety of settings.

As I read through the different reflections on education found in *Heart*, I began to look for the thread of influence or insight that runs through the pages. You might want to do the same thing as you read about Sacred Heart education lived out in jail ministry, work with the homeless, in schools, with youth and young adults who are searching for a way to make the work more a mirror of God's hope for our world and our peoples.

One quotation from Janet Stuart struck me as capturing something of what we are called to do both as educators and as people. She says, "No student should leave a lesson the same as when s/he went in." While Janet was referring to an interaction in a formal educational setting, I translate this idea to "No person should leave an encounter with another the same as s/he began." I think Janet's point is that we are called, not only to make a difference in the life of whomever we encounter, but also to encourage, allow or enable the other to change for the better. I am sure Janet's contemplation on the life of Jesus and the way he met each person along the road taught her this attitude of heart and mind. And what else is education except to lead people out from where they are to where they have the capacity to be. Wouldn't it be refreshing if we and the people of our day practiced this way of being educators for and with one another?

I hope that you enjoy *Heart Magazine* and draw your own insights from its rich content. Know that the Religious of the Sacred Heart pray for each one of you, that you discover the love of God in your own life and spread the love of God that you know to each person you meet. May the experience of God, ever new among us, especially during this Christmas season, give you joy, peace and strength. ✝

With much love,



Barbara Dawson RSCJ

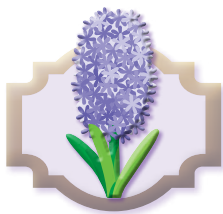
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Provincial

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*Special issue dedicated to
Janet Erskine Stuart, RSCJ, 1857-1914*

Heart

Heart is published two times a year to highlight the mission and ministries of the Society of the Sacred Heart, United States – Canada, for a wide circle of friends. The covers, photographs of hearts in nature, symbolic of Christ's presence at the heart of the universe, bear witness to the contemplative dimension of the Society's "wholly contemplative, wholly apostolic" mission: To discover and reveal God's love through the service of education.



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The Society of the Sacred Heart was founded by Saint Madeleine Sophie Barat in post-revolutionary France and brought to the United States by Saint Philippine Duchesne in 1818 and to Canada in 1842. For more information about the mission and ministries of the United States – Canada Province, please visit www.rscj.org.

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Mission Advancement

begins a new season

By Shirley Miller, RSCJ

As the seasons turn from brilliant splashes of autumn color to the clear blue skies of a Midwestern winter, so too, the Society of the Sacred Heart has gone through remarkable changing of the seasons the past ten years. What seemed like a long winter in 2002 has been transformed into a new spring-time for the Society's spiritual and educational mission. With visionary RSCJ leadership, excellent advisors and the generous support of thousands of alumnae and alumni, the Network of Sacred Heart schools, Associates, co-workers, families and friends, we are on firmer ground financially than we were ten years ago.

Your gifts to the *In Mission for Life* campaign have strengthened the existing mission and opened new possibilities for the future:

- Continuing compassionate care for our eldest members
- Providing formation to mission programs for the adults in Sacred Heart schools
- Supporting our spiritual ministries in the Spiritual Ministry Center, San Diego; Sophie Barat House, New Orleans and RSCJ who provide retreats and spiritual direction
- Underwriting salaries for RSCJ who are working directly with the poor and those most in need

- Creating an international house of studies in Chicago for RSCJ from developing countries coming to the United States for formal education
- Opening the Stuart Center for Mission, Educational Leadership and Technology in Washington, D.C.

The *Constitutions of the Society of the Sacred Heart* state: "Faithful to her (St. Madeleine Sophie's) inspiration, and, like her, open to new situations, we make her desire our own:

- that people become ever more aware of truth, of love and of freedom
- that they discover the significance of their lives, and devote themselves to others
- that they take part creatively in the common effort to transform the world
- that they be enabled to encounter the love of Jesus
- that they let their lives be shaped by an active faith." (§11)

Faithful to the inspiration of St. Madeleine Sophie and to our mission in the Church of *making known the revelation of God's love, whose source and symbol is for us the Heart of Christ* (Constitutions §3), we continue in hope.





Betsy Hartson, RSCJ, fastens a cross around Evelyn Uluoha's neck during a welcoming ceremony at their community in Washington, DC. Evelyn is the first candidate of the United States – Canada Province.

This year the Society throughout the world is observing the centenary of the death of Janet Erskine Stuart, RSCJ. Mother Stuart was one of the Society's most inspirational writers, leaders and educators. She had a profound understanding of finding God in all places, in all things, in all people:

Remember that whatever happens, you must say to yourself, according to circumstances, joyfully and thankfully, or humbly and submissively or bravely or, if need be, defiantly to the troubles within, "This is all part of the story, and the story is God's love for you and yours for God."

All seasons have been part of the Society's story, and you, our friends, have been with us at all times – in frost and falling leaves, in blizzards and ice storms, in spring rains and blooming gardens, in warm sun and long summer evenings. It has been a story of love and faithfulness written by all of us and bound in the Heart of Jesus. Thank you. ✦



Cathy Rodee Brennan and Dorothy Tato Wincek at the Mater Tea gratitude event in San Diego for participants in the *In Mission for Life* campaign.



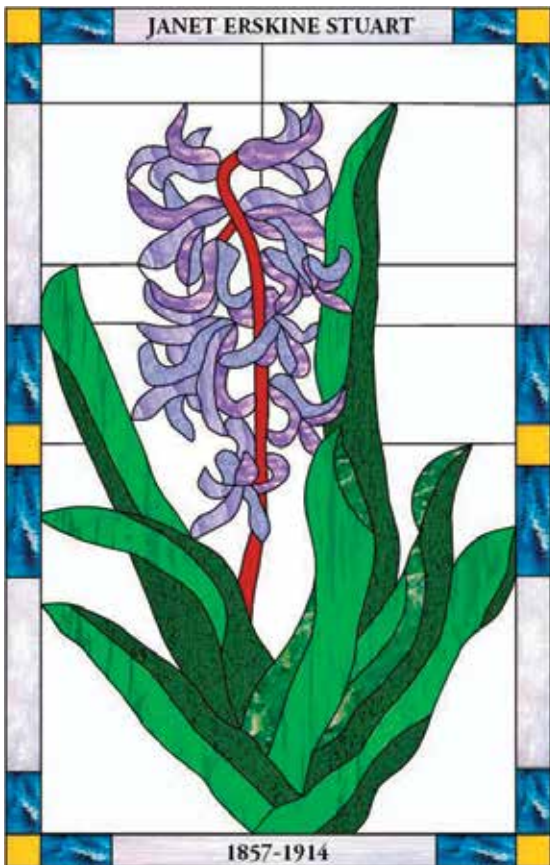
Sisters Betsy Furay Winters and Sally Furay, RSCJ, join Jean Gazzo (right) at the Mater Tea at the University of San Diego, following Sally's presentation on the creation of the University of San Diego as a merger of the San Diego College for Women, the San Diego College for Men and the Law School.

Sustainer Gifts

New! Recurring monthly gifts – visit rscj.org and click "Donate"



Spirituality Forum brings Sacred Heart family together



Brian Bell, dean of students for Sacred Heart Preparatory, Atherton, designed this hyacinth window in honor of Janet Erskine Stuart, RSCJ. Spirituality Forum participants helped to piece the stained glass together during workshops at the forum.

The Society of the Sacred Heart's fifth Spirituality Forum was held in honor of Janet Erskine Stuart. It was in her spirit, too, with time for education, time for nature and time for prayer and contemplation. Held July 10-14 on the idyllic campus of Sacred Heart Schools, Atherton, the Forum brought together more than 200 members of the Sacred Heart family, including Religious of the Sacred Heart, Sacred Heart Associates, educators, alumnae/i and friends. The program included four dynamic keynote speakers, small group discussions, an impressive variety of breakout sessions and regular opportunities for individual and shared prayer, including daily liturgies complete with beautiful music.

The theme, *Janet Erskine Stuart: Spirituality and Education for the 21st Century*, was chosen in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the death of Janet Erskine Stuart, RSCJ, the sixth superior general of the Society of the Sacred Heart, noted for her writings and her impact on Sacred Heart education. Each of the four main presentations was related to Mother Stuart:

- *Janet Erskine Stuart: An Historical Approximation* by Kathleen Hughes, RSCJ
- *Janet Erskine Stuart, RSCJ – Seeker, Educator, Spiritual Guide* by Suzanne Cooke, RSCJ (Adapted for *Heart* on page 9.)
- *The Educational Spirit of the Society of the Sacred Heart: Shared Thoughts on the Plan of Studies* by Raymond O'Connor
- *Evolution, Education and the Emerging Christ* by Ilia Delio, OSF

Videos of the first three presentations are available on our YouTube channel: [YouTube.com/RSCJVideos](https://www.youtube.com/RSCJVideos).

The dozens of breakout options ranged from *Janet Stuart's Equine Legacy* to human trafficking to best practices for international service trips.

We thank the planning committee of Mary Charlotte Chandler, RSCJ, James Everitt (SHS-Atherton), Carolyn Osiek, RSCJ and Associate Jane Steinfels for bringing us together in prayer and learning as part of the Sacred Heart family. ❖



1

1. Mary Ann (Sis) Flynn, RSCJ and Associate Franny Glasser
2. Forum planning committee members Jane Steinfelds, Mary Charlotte Chandler, RSCJ, and Carolyn Osiek, RSCJ. Committee Member James Everitt could not attend the event.
3. Sisters Sheila Hammond and Maria Cimperman
4. Candidate Evelyn Oluoha receives a blessing during one of the beautiful liturgies planned by Mary McGann, RSCJ
5. Meghan Donahue, Lillian Conaghan, RSCJ and Susan Carpenter place their stained glass in the Janet Erskine Stuart hyacinth window.



2



3



4



5

In Memoriam

*May they find light and peace
in God's presence.*

Mary Brady, RSCJ
May 4, 2013

Anna Mae Marheineke
August 14, 2013

Patricia Steppe, RSCJ
September 4, 2013

Joan McKenna, RSCJ
September 12, 2013

Joanne Reynolds, RSCJ
September 14, 2013

Mary Genevieve Smyth
September 18, 2013

Judy Cagney
November 3, 2013

Maureen Cronin
November 9, 2013

Rosemary (Ronnie) Dewey
November 13, 2013

*Profiles are available on
our website, www.rscj.org*

A legacy of devotion

Madeleine S. Ortman Retires

Madeleine Sophie Ortman was born to the mission of Sacred Heart education. Her mother attended the Convent of the Sacred Heart in New York City (91st Street), and Madeleine graduated from Stone Ridge School of the Sacred Heart. If there is a Sacred Heart gene, it is dominant in Madeleine's DNA.

For ten years Madeleine served as the executive director of the Network of Sacred Heart Schools. When she started, we were, as a group of heads of school, a bit unruly.

Our national meetings were often unfocused and unproductive. Madeleine instinctively knew that the way to correct this behavior was to have us focus on tasks, adhere to a well thought out agenda and start and end meetings on time. No small accomplishment given that heads of school are used to running the show. Madeleine turned us around with skill, understanding and a great deal of patience.

There are three main contributions Madeleine made to the mission of Sacred Heart education. I mentioned the first above. She got the twenty-two schools of the Network to move forward as a group. Second, she worked tirelessly with individuals who needed her expert assistance. Madeleine would fly to any school in the country at a moment's notice to help a head or a board with some problem or challenge. Third, Madeleine was the face of Sacred Heart education to the larger worlds of Catholic schools and independent schools. Madeleine faithfully attended national meetings of the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) and the Directors of Catholic Education. Through her, our mission became well known and admired by many fellow educators.

Madeleine is no longer in the executive director's chair. But her legacy of devotion to Sacred Heart education will live on through all the lives she touched for a decade. Thank you, Madeleine, for your years of loving service and inexhaustible dedication.

Joseph J. Ciancaglini
Chair, Network Board of Directors
Head of School, 91st Street



Madeleine Ortman and
Joseph J. Ciancaglini



JANET Erskine Stuart

Seeker, Educator
and Spiritual Guide

— By Suzanne Cooke, RSCJ —

*M*other Stuart was one of the leading and most beloved educators of the Society of the Sacred Heart. Respected throughout the English-speaking world because of her book on education, Mother Stuart urged teachers to work together on behalf of the children. “It is not so much what we say or do that educates; what really educates is who we are.” Constant growth, development and integration were important to her. She taught her teachers that to educate was “to fit citizens for the Kingdom of Heaven.” At a time when the goal of school life had become the passing of examinations, Mother Stuart insisted that educators must “bring up children for the future, not for the present.” All her writings on education were directed toward the end of finding God.

The basic facts of Mother Stuart’s life are well outlined on the website of the Society’s England & Wales Province, www.societysacredheart.org.uk. To understand Mother Stuart, one first must see her as a **seeker**. Born in 1857 in the Anglican rectory at Cottesmore, in Rutland, England, Janet was the youngest of thirteen children. Early in her life, she experienced the loss of her mother; this “aloneness” set Mother Stuart on a path toward understanding and seeking truth. This search became more earnest when prompted by her brother’s question, regarding her end in life, her *telos*. Janet realized that she had no idea as to her ultimate

purpose. In her words, "... but it seemed to me to be a very serious thing, to be thirteen years old, and not to know my last end. I made up my mind that it must be found. The search lasted seven years, and was one of the happiest times of my life. It began by my examining the grounds of my faith, and they all melted away."

Initially this search was supported by the capable, well-trained German and Swiss governesses from whom she learned German and French. She studied philosophy, mathematics, history and literature. Complementing this study was the daily conversation between Janet and her father, Canon Stuart, an Anglican rector. Each morning Janet and her father would ride out to speak with Canon Stuart's congregants, many of whom were farming the acreage owned by the Stuarts. One can imagine the conversations between father and daughter about God's creation, the sheer beauty of nature and the pastoral needs of the people. We also know that the weekly activity of the Stuart household included Canon Stuart's preparation of his Sunday homily. The hearing of scripture and the careful study of God's word worked on the young Janet's imagination simulta-

neously, as her mind grappled with the theological and philosophical questions her study raised. This childhood created a context in which Janet grew in her intuitive sense of the Spirit dwelling within her heart. The promptings of the Holy Spirit seem to cause within her a restlessness that she would later describe: "The loneliness is that of our soul made for God and nothing else can fill it."

Her search ultimately resulted in Mother Stuart's conversion to Roman Catholicism at the age of twenty-one. Three years later this same search for the truth brought her to the Society of the Sacred Heart. Both decisions were costly; embracing Catholicism and the convent were considered foolish and even scandalous in nineteenth century England. Certainly for Canon Stuart, there was no choice but to consider his daughter's decisions a break with the family.

The intensity of her need to know and understand continued to drive Mother Stuart as a Religious of the Sacred Heart. Reading her letters and essays, one can easily discern her search for truth. She wrote about loneliness, "I think it is a sort of thing that almost belongs to human life, and certainly

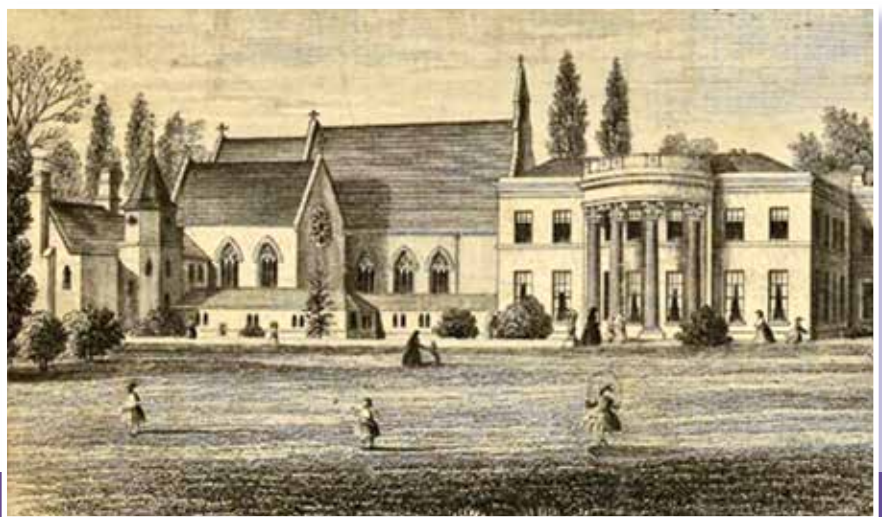
to all that is best in it; it is a sort of home-longing for God, and nothing else will satisfy it. ... He is the home of the soul. But heaven is coming, life is a moment, and then the loneliness will be over." Conversion of heart continued throughout Mother Stuart's life.

Another important lens to adopt when thinking about Mother Stuart is that she was a natural **educator**. Mother Stuart is known for her contributions to the improvement of secondary education for girls and young women in Sacred Heart schools and colleges across the world. Biographies attest to her desire to support children in their desire to know. Once, when asked what she would like to be, she answered, "A teacher, I would not have minded what I taught, so long as I could have caught someone and taught them something." Her conferences on education and her book, *The Education of Catholic Girls*, reveal Mother Stuart's focus on leading children and young people forward from ignorance to understanding, from darkness to light. Her effectiveness as an educator is centered in her conviction that every child and every educator is worthy of deep respect. "Those who have to educate," she wrote, "must themselves

Janet Erskine Stuart as a young girl



Convent of the Sacred Heart, Roehampton, circa 1860



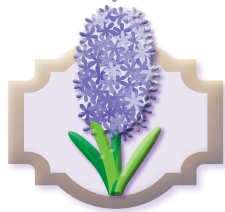
have an idea of what they want, they must believe in the possibility of every mind and character to be lifted up to something better than it has already attained; they must themselves be striving for some higher excellence and must believe and care deeply for the things they teach. For no one can be educated by maxim and precept; it is the life lived, and the things loved and the ideals believed in by which we tell, one upon another.”

Mother Stuart demands of each person a self-discipline that insists on excellence and clarity in thought and expression. In letters and conferences, Mother Stuart echoes St. Madeleine Sophie Barat’s vision of education as a means to manifest God’s love. Mother Stuart offers insights on essential values of Sacred Heart education such as relationship, critical thinking, reflection, courage, confidence, joy, competence, lively faith, celebrations, grace, openness to mystery, service and formation for life. She wrote,

“There are two ways of preparing children for the government of themselves in after-life, one direct and the other indirect.

The first has its merits; it is quick in results, often very successful. It fosters piety, inculcates some clear principles, dictates the main lines of action and by rule and maxim, fits the being into its place in the world, and gives it means to do its duty creditably.

The indirect method is longer and less clearly defined. It aims at giving a guiding light within, and power to climb a difficult path, and pick a way through unknown country by that light. This must be waited for, and slowly developed, but in the end it is of greater worth.



Mother Stuart saw prayer as an act of friendship. Just as communication in any relationship is borne in the heart, so it is with prayer.

The training of the Sacred Heart aims at this. God hears our unuttered desires and as they are satisfied they grow ... The more we desire and attain, the more we shall desire and the more attain ... that is why our life is so immense.”

Mother Stuart believed that nurturing the “guiding light within” is the sacred work God has entrusted to parents and educators.

The third way of thinking about Mother Stuart is that she was a woman of prayer. As a **spiritual guide**, Mother Stuart has much to offer us. Convinced that there are limitless possibilities for sanctity, Mother Stuart believed all of us are made for union with God. She urged us to have noble friendships with the saints so that we might learn *heavenly-mindedness*. She wrote, “... *the inner life in this way is God working, we corresponding, listening to God’s word that speaks within, commanding, inviting, praising, reproving, asking. That is our real life, going on uninterruptedly, which, if we are too busy with exterior things, we lose sight of. An irreparable loss – there is so much to be done, and no time to lose. The work is done in silence, tranquility and recollection, and without them it is not done at all.*”

Mother Stuart saw prayer as an act of friendship. Just as communication in any relationship is borne in the heart, so it is with prayer. There, attraction sometimes takes the form of longing; at other times as an intuition that there is more to life than surface reality, and it urges us to seek the Other. One might say that Mother Stuart saw prayer as an affair of the heart. Why engage in the inner life? Because it holds the key to genuine joy. In her words: *“May peace be our gift to all who come near or depend on us ... May God’s presence be ever our living joy and the central fact in our life, from which will flow patience, calmness, and an unquenchable joy, and may we believe that with that in our soul we can meet anything.”*

The centennial celebration of her death affords us the opportunity to get to know Janet Stuart in new ways. This issue of *Heart* invites us into exploring Mother Stuart as a seeker, an educator, a spiritual guide and a friend. ✦



Suzanne Cooke, RSCJ



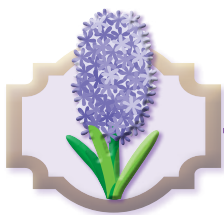
Part of the Magnificat Houses network, the Loaves & Fishes soup kitchen serves hot midday meals to 200 men, women and children.

On being part of the story

By Sara Kay Thompson, RSCJ

"Remember that whatever happens ... you must say to yourself, according to circumstances, joyfully and thankfully or humbly and submissively or bravely or, if need be, defiantly, to the troubles within, "This is part of the story and the story is God's love for you and yours for him."

—Janet Erskine Stuart



When I arrived at Magnificat Houses (in Houston) ten years ago, I felt I knew all the answers. I was going to save the people of the community. It should not be so hard, I thought. I'd worked with the mentally ill and the homeless in Detroit. That work may not have been in transitional housing, but it was all the same. To me. Then.

But that was not to happen. Instead, the people I work with have had at least as much impact on my life as I have had on theirs. It is the residents who have taught me about separation from family, living on the streets and involuntary hospitalizations.

Often I go into the men's and women's houses to check on interior appearance (*Interior decorating eleven houses, my dreams have come true!*). I always find the women's houses in need of some extra cleaning, more so than the men's. One day, I went into one of the men's houses and just watched a gentleman work methodically back and forth with a mop. After some time, I asked Mr. Mike why he

was so careful about how he cleans the house. He replied, "I want to take care of my work. This is my home. I think if someone has to do something, they have to do it right." "But who taught you?" I asked. "My momma taught me to take pride in housework." Lesson learned.

Magnificat Houses is the only organization in Houston that practices the Corporal Works of Mercy. We have Mass six days a week and we live Catholic Social Teaching. We work with the homeless, former offenders, people who are mentally ill and men with HIV/AIDS to create a path to independence and personal dignity. Our eleven buildings house 189 men and women, a psychosocial rehabilitation center, a hostel for women, a soup kitchen, an upscale resale shop and a thrift store. All this is part of our story. This multifaceted life that makes up Magnificat is one fluid story of people coming and going.

Gertie came to us from the streets. I met her at our soup kitchen and noticed she seemed well educated, but she has this rolling gate and has trouble focusing on a person. Lighting her cigarettes could be considered dangerous, and if she did it herself, she was bound to burn herself. Gertie was pleasant when she wanted to be, but she was rough, street smart. I invited her into Magnificat on the condition that she curb the language and let someone make her bed everyday. I moved her to Duchesne House for our elderly women or those who have special needs. Gertie became the house jester and was a lot of fun to be around.

One day the Houston Associates arranged for a cupcake party at Magnificat's Duchesne House. Ann Caire, RSCJ, was there. When Gertie saw her, she threw her arms around Sister Caire's neck. "I remember you, you helped in the third grade at Duchesne. I made my First Communion at Duchesne." [Academy of the Sacred Heart in Houston]

It was like homecoming week: two people who had an instant love for each other. Memories in common but very different paths encountered. I truly believe Sister Caire and Gertie had that moment that Janet Stuart so eloquently described for us as "part of the story of God's love." Gertie stayed with us for a few more months before she moved on.

At Magnificat there is no one story. It is a collage of people who come from the streets, hospitals, family homes and prisons who form the community. God does love us. We are sure of it. That is why God has given us a home. Those we love whole-heartedly will know the love of God in others and in ourselves. *This is part of the story and the story is God's love for you and yours for him.* ✦

Magnificat does more than housing. Shown below is the building with the resale and consignment shop, woodworking and art studios.



© Darwin R. "Matt" Dillon, Flickr



Sara Kay Thompson, RSCJ, with one of the Magnificat Houses drivers.

The wisdom of the woman:
**The legacy of
Stuart at Stuart**

By Patricia L. Fagin, PhD, Head of School, Stuart Country Day School

This year, we celebrate the centenary of Janet Erskine Stuart's death. At the same time, Stuart Country Day School of the Sacred Heart, her namesake, is celebrating its 50th anniversary. What a wonderful historical intersection and perfect moment to reflect on how Janet Erskine Stuart has shaped and continues to shape our Sacred Heart community.

You cannot spend even a short time at our school and not feel the influence of Mother Stuart. Her educational admonition that it is "better to begin a great work than to finish a small one" was etched in brass at our entry in 1963, greeting every visitor and reminding all that "our education is not meant to turn the children out small and finished but seriously begun on a wide basis."

Her words are the hallmark of a Stuart education. For fifty years Stuart has prided itself on graduating young women who are bright, capable, caring and compassionate. It was particularly heart-warming to hear so many alumnae at our 50th anniversary celebration counting their Stuart experience as central to who they are today. They spoke of our Stuart faculty who taught, as Janet did, not "by maxim or precept," but rather "by the life lived, and the things loved and the ideals believed in."

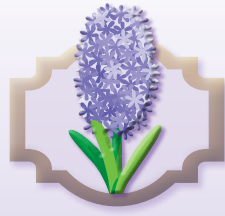


Celebrating the history and future at Stuart's 50th Anniversary Kick-Off Celebrations, left to right, past headmistresses Joan Kirby, RSCJ, Judith Garson, RSCJ, Joan Magnetti, RSCJ, Sandra Theunick, Frances de la Chapelle, RSCJ, and current Head of School Dr. Patty Fagin.

As Stuart's first lay head of school, I want to ensure that that legacy endures.

As we begin our 50th year, we are without the daily presence of RSCJ; we are challenged to make the charism of the Religious of the Sacred Heart integral to the lived experience of our faculty, staff, students and families. My first understandings of that charism

have sprung from the study of our founding Mothers' writings. Attending the *Roots That Give Us Wings* conference in St. Charles, Missouri, in my first weeks as a Sacred Heart administrator, I was introduced to St. Madeleine Sophie Barat, St. Rose Philippine Duchesne and Mother Janet Erskine Stuart – powerful, faith-filled women



*We are challenged
to make the charism of
the Religious of the Sacred
Heart integral to the
lived experience of our
faculty, staff, students
and families.*

of the past who were continuing to shape the future of Sacred Heart students across the globe.

Today, I strive, through new faculty formation to mission programs, in daily verses, weekly Words from the Heart, division and faculty meetings and through Network professional development to weave the powerful witness of these women's lives and words into the lives of our faculty and staff. As her namesake school, I particularly look to Mother Stuart.

In her work, this turn of the 20th century woman set the stage for the best educational practices of the 21st century. Author of a classic study of education, *The Education of Catholic Girls*, Mother Stuart told the educators of the early 1900's that every parent had the right to ask of their child's teacher, "What have you done with my child, for my child? Show me," she'd say, "the trace of your influence on her *mind, heart, character, and conduct.*" Clearly her words are the perfect precursor to today's Goals and Criteria. As Janet called the early religious to educate the whole child, so we are called to do the same.

Similarly, Janet challenged her teachers to "believe in the possibility of every mind and character to be lifted up to something better than it has already attained" by striving for some higher excellence, by believing and caring deeply for the things they teach. Today we encourage teachers to demonstrate the same commitment to teaching and love of subject. Nearly one hundred years after her seminal writings in

teacher preparation, we find ourselves still honoring the same methods of instruction Janet so carefully detailed:

There are two ways of preparing children ... one direct and the other indirect. The first has its merits; it is quick in results, often very successful. It fosters piety, inculcates some clear principles, dictates the main lines of action, and by rule and maxim, fits the being into its place in the world, and gives it means to do its duty creditably. The indirect method is longer and less clearly defined. It aims at giving a guiding light within, and power to climb a difficult path, and pick a way through unknown country by that light. This must be waited for, and slowly developed, but in the end it is of greater worth. The training of the Sacred Heart aims at this.

Janet Erskine Stuart's focus on teacher education was exemplary, but her words to our students are equally powerful. Whether at our annual all-school Sacred Heart Assembly, in notes written to juniors and seniors at retreat, in daily prayer, monthly liturgies or prayer services, Janet's words relate an

understanding of today's students that belies a hundred year interlude.

She reaches out to them across time when she writes:

Cultivate the wish to learn, rather than the wish to be taught. Be determined to "pick up" and do not wait for the Professor and the pedagogical devices of his or her craft ... Do not think that lessons will do it, if you wait for lessons you will wait a life-time ... If we wait to be taught, we shall never learn.

The higher we want to fly, the greater the risk, but that is the glorious part of it. The great uncertainties in which we trust God, the breathless risks we run, with no assurance but our great trust in God – that seems to me to be of the essence of our life and its beauty. This will grow upon you. You will get your balance in the risk and get to love it.

What amazing words! It's as if she's carefully guiding her children of the Sacred Heart – offering them a roadmap to tomorrow. She encourages them to take control of their own learning, calms their fears and sends them on their journey.

As we spend this year in celebration of our 50th anniversary and Janet's centenary, we joyously immerse ourselves in the wisdom of the woman for whom our school is named. Following her most cherished sentiment, we recognize that Janet was destined for a mission in life and we are grateful that she found that mission in the Sacred Heart, filling a place in our lives which no one else could fill. ❖

Revealing God's love: The best type of work

By Lori Wilson,
Convent of the Sacred Heart, Greenwich

In 2001, I was invited to interview for a teaching position at Convent of the Sacred Heart in Greenwich, Connecticut, and during that interview had my first interaction with a Religious of the Sacred Heart. We talked about a challenge many teenage girls struggle with – leadership roles for women in the church. She posed, “What would you say to a girl if she asked you about this?” Our conversation on that topic ranged widely over the next hour, and I thought to myself, “My heart has come home.” The spirituality of the Society and making known the Heart of Christ in the world matched my own personal mission to reflect God’s love to all I came in contact with. That RSCJ had the heart of an educator. She wasn’t closed, with her own view of what an answer should be; she was open to share her views and to listen to mine, to see things from another perspective, to challenge the norm. It was my first inkling of what having the “heart of an educator” meant.

I never wanted to work in education. I planned on working with the elderly and getting degrees in psychology and social work. Looking back through my life, I’ve never thought of myself as an educator, but have always been in some type of educational ministry. Convent of the Sacred Heart, Greenwich, has been the place I have found myself these past thirteen years working in campus ministry, theology, summer enrichment and community service. The years I have spent here have changed my life.

I knew during my first year at Sacred Heart that I wanted to be an Associate. Twelve years after that desire first became known, it is finally a reality. Being connected to a group of people who want to grow in their relationship with God and pray together while deepening their understanding of the spirituality of the Society is what my daughter calls “having my cake and eating it too. You are like a married nun, Mom.” My husband and three daughters support me in all that I do.



Lori Wilson (right) joins Reyna Gonzalez, RSCJ, on a Sacred Heart International Service Projects trip in Haiti.



Tenth graders from Convent of the Sacred Heart, Greenwich, on retreat at Sprout Creek Farm.

Helping people see how much they are loved by God is the best type of work anyone could ever have and it's woven into all aspects of what I do, whether it's leading a retreat with other faculty for our students, accompanying students on a service learning experience in New Orleans, working with our "God Squad" before school to plan a chapel service, or talking with a student who is struggling.

Years ago, when helping to plan a Formation to Mission trip for our faculty, that same RSCJ – the first one I met – told me, "I think you need to get your heart broken. Take some faculty to Mexico and walk in the footsteps of Philippine." After I left her, I thought, "What a crazy thing to say to me!" But I did it. My heart was indeed broken as I began to see the wounded Heart of Christ in the world in a much different way. It's an experience that stays with me even now, and yet I have returned there and to many other places in the US, in Mexico, in Haiti and in Uganda, to name a few, through the blessing of my work.

This part of what I do keeps me grounded and connected to God's heart. We think of these experiences as service learning, but really they are more learning for me than service: Learning that life can be enjoyed simply, with fewer things, with deeper faith, with more appreciation and gratitude, with more living in the present moment with the people who surround us, both near and far.

Janet Erskine Stuart wrote, "So we must remember that it is better to begin a great work than to finish a small one." My work is about planting seeds that will grow when needed. When a child is

struggling and feeling alone, the seed will sprout, and she will remember that she is of inestimable value, loved beyond reason, and has the power to transform the world into a better place. It's not a finished small piece – but a great work begun both on a personal level and for the community worldwide. ❖



Lori Wilson led a group of Network educators on a Mission Immersion Program experience to visit Sacred Heart Schools in Uganda.

Preaching love and forgiveness where



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Rosemary Dowd, RSCJ, has served the spiritual needs of prisoners for four decades. She was led to this ministry by her reflection on a quotation from St. John of the Cross, “Where there is no love, put love – and you will find love.” Where else, she asked, is love lacking so much as in a prison? “God seemed to be saying to me, ‘This is where I want you,’” she recalled. “I told the provincial I would do whatever she wanted me to do, but I thought God was asking me to go to jail.” The following is a reflection on her ministry.

there is no love



By Rosemary Dowd, RSCJ

I first encountered the Society of the Sacred Heart when my older sister Patti was a student at Convent of the Sacred Heart, Sheridan Road. I begged to enroll as soon as possible. I loved the school and the nuns and generally looked for ways to “help Mother” after school, as I enjoyed just hanging around. I had a very happy home life, but I also really enjoyed being at Sheridan Road. Gradually, I became aware that God was offering me a vocation to the Society. I read Janet Stuart’s *Life and Letters*, among other books. In my senior year, I made the decision to enter the Society of the Sacred Heart. In my early years in the Society I taught, but I never considered myself a very good teacher. I did love being with the children, especially as surveillante general (dean of students).

When cloister ended in 1964, I was attending the Pastoral Institute at Loyola University of Chicago. We had the opportunity to tour parts of our city I had never seen, including the courts and the projects. It seemed to me that few people cared about people in jail, and I felt a strong attraction to working closely with those people and showing them that some do care, most especially, God.

While I was teaching at the Academy of the Sacred Heart, Woodlands, I began volunteering at Lake County Jail in Waukegan. The Sheriff first asked me to sit in the visiting room in case anyone wanted to come in and talk. I listened. That was it, really. There was always a line, though I was something of an unknown, until the person appeared before me on the other side of the glass. One evening, Holy Thursday, I returned home from my two hours in the jail visiting room and went to sign our *prie dieu* list for adoration. The heading was: “Can’t you spend one hour with Me?” I knew absolutely I had just spent two hours with the Lord in that jail. From that moment – more than forty-three years ago – my desire for this ministry has only intensified, and my gratitude to God and the Society for allowing me to pursue this “second vocation” is boundless.

I have been employed in three jails over the years. I have been at Cook County Jail since 1979, first as a social worker, now as volunteer staff chaplain to 750 medical and psychiatric patients. Even with no paycheck, this is the most wonderful ministry possible. The men are an absolute delight to work with. It is such a joy to be able, at our weekly Communion service, to preach the charism of the Society, the love and forgiveness of our merciful God. It’s the best job I have ever had! Many ask me privately to pray with or for them. Such spontaneous vocal prayer has never been my gift, but I do it and the inmates seem pleased. I often say the Novena of Confidence to the Sacred Heart, and the guys do seem to like that. They are always respectful, courteous and appreciative of the time I spend with them. Some of the men in this jail are on their way to the penitentiary, some for very serious crimes. I don’t want to know what their offenses are; that’s not my role here. Everything I do is aimed at forgiveness, the love and mercy of Jesus Christ.

In my early years in jail I wondered how that ministry fit with my vow of education, which to me means trying to draw out what is within a person. After my experiences as chaplain, I no longer have that question. I do not do this perfectly, but my conscious effort is to help every person I encounter realize the goodness within, no matter how sinful he may be. I want each person to know that God loves and forgives us and will *never* give up on us or abandon us. God’s love will transform us if we are open and willing to be transformed. I think that if a person who did not know before of the transformative power of God’s love learns that lesson in jail, it will have been worth his incarceration. Of course, I would definitely prefer that they learn it elsewhere! While I am called daily to serve in jail, and I go there gladly, I am aware that it is decidedly not a good place to be for those who cannot go home at night. ✚

A visit with Janet Stuart

By Sue Acheson, RSCJ, Province of England & Wales



Sue Acheson, RSCJ

In 2010, the England & Wales Province began their planning for the centenary in 2014 of Janet Erskine Stuart's death.

I was then a senior manager in a large, state-funded college in London and was asked to give some input on what Janet Stuart might have to say to us as educators today. This required some research, mostly drawn from Stuart's *The Education of Catholic Girls*, Maud Monahan's *Life and Letters*, and handwritten notes of Stuart's critical observations of practice lessons. I was delighted to discover that, although until then she had had no influence on my ministry or life, and the context in which she worked was so different from mine, we shared much in terms of values, priorities and approach. Reflecting on these shared values reassured me and helped me find a way to see how my work was part of a tradition, of which Janet Stuart was a charismatic exponent.

What I discovered is the way in which her educator's heart was at work in her ministry of spiritual friendship with many. In her letters and conferences we see the same values of being open to change, of valuing the uniqueness of the individual and the unique call of God to each one. The essay below is an edited version of the talk I gave in 2010, at the beginning of my acquaintance with Janet Stuart.

The other day the phone rang in my office; there was a visitor to see me. I wasn't expecting anyone and seeing her from afar thought it was possibly the mother of one of our Muslim students, perhaps a recent immigrant from a part of the Islamic world that had a rather unique style of hijab. But when I saw her face and owlish glasses, I realised my mistake. It was Janet Erskine Stuart, and she had come to find out what I was up to and how things were going on since her day. She was interested, she said, in the college, because it trained teachers and had a branch where women were educated alongside men. She was also interested to find out how, without the benefit of Catholic teaching, we polished off the "roughness" of young people. Although Heaven was a tremendously stimulating place (there was plenty of hunting and angelic horses), she did miss teaching and would like to see some, please.

I was a bit appalled. We were both RSCJ, true, but we had very different résumés – what could we have to say to each other? However, with the hope that her prayers would send some more young people our way, I agreed to meet with her. We started with the educational context.

In her day (1857-1914), she said, there were passionate debates, in the aftermath of the debacle of the Boer war, about the purpose of education. Bad leadership, bad management, lack of resourcefulness and practical ineptitude had led to unnecessary loss of life, war crimes, lost battles ... Britain had very nearly got embroiled in a war it could not win! Debates raged in the press about how the recent reforms in education had failed the country and its youth. How children had been over-examined and forced to rote-learn information that they did not know how to apply in real life ... She recalled public debates about what constituted good citizenship and employers complaining that education was not equipping young people for jobs in industry or business.

She remembered debates in 1902 about religious education: should it be compulsory in state elementary schools? Would it lead to sectarianism? It was a period of widening participation in university education, especially by women, and that was controversial too. She sighed – there were a lot of interesting ideas around and many were good. Teachers, as she wrote in her book on education, understand how to teach, understand learning; and too much meddling from government, however well intentioned, can do more harm than good.

So here was some familiar ground. In England we continue to debate whether the public exam system is fit for purpose. Why are our 16-24 year olds near the bottom of international tables for literacy and

numeracy skills, even after decades of attempted reforms? Do our young people leaving school or university have the right skills for the work place? Does the focus on a functional purpose for university education come at the expense of a beneficial traditional emphasis on “education of the whole person?”

But there were also many differences between us. Her education world – the one she writes about in *The Education of Catholic Girls* – was apparently a golden one: a private Catholic boarding school of about 150 girls, all from wealthy families. My education world:

state-funded public education for 3,500 full-time students in apprenticeship courses as well as academic and vocational programmes. Among our concerns were gang conflicts, homelessness, lack of parental support, mental health issues ... There are still wars and anguish about questions such as: what is education for? What are we aiming at? Janet Stuart knew about family stress and upset, and in her work with the partly state-funded schools run by the Society, she understood the merits as well as the frustrations of conforming to government requirements. The detail of Janet’s world was different, but her aims are recognisable.

I asked about her thoughts on curriculum. Her ideas, it must be confessed, seemed limited. She advocated nature study, but not physics or chemistry. She encouraged a sort of philosophy, but it was really only history of (Catholic) ideas with a little logic thrown in. I liked her enthusiasm for history. Home economics, a little math, religion, English and art complete the picture. What did she think about engineering, business, and graphics? “Possibly all very well for children of working people,” she said, “who had to make their own way – but more about instruction than education.” I disagreed, but reflected, too, that things have not changed so much – there is still a destructive division in England between “academic” and “vocational” subjects; employers complain about standards, but often look for interviewees with academic rather than vocational qualifications. Janet was surprised but thoughtful when I explained why science and math were so central to education, including, of course, for girls. She agreed that the section of her book that assumes they are not would “no longer do.”

I asked her about her views on higher education and was again disappointed. Her enthusiasm for higher education for women was qualified. Women in her day might study for a degree, but it would, she thought, be impossible for them to get the full benefit of university experience, as *necessarily* they could



not be allowed the same social freedoms that men were allowed. I think I picked up an excitement in her – possibly even an envy – at the opportunities now available, at how girls and women might now find their “*telos*” beyond the boundaries of family and social expectation.

Janet sympathised with the ongoing drive to improve standards in education, with the inspectorate’s insistence that only “outstanding” is really good enough. Being outstanding is exhausting. It can take away from the joy of teaching, unless you understand that all it means is that every person who leaves your class leaves believing confidently in his/her unique potential, and with the skills to turn this potential into flourishing lives – their own and those of others. She reminded me that she had written frequently about striving for the

The true test of excellence is what goes on in lessons and the spring in the step of the students who leave it.

“highest and the best.” She recognised that only excellence is good enough for the “royal” souls of the children she educated. She acknowledged that what she called “the loss of direction” in society meant that girls and women had “to take care of themselves and be responsible for themselves.”

The modern inspectorate would like this very much. They call it being “an independent learner” and refer to “moral and spiritual development” and to “social cohesion” brought about by encouraging learners to learn from and respect one another’s differences. On the other hand, the modern inspector might be helpfully challenged by Janet’s insistence that “what with weighing and measuring, inspecting and reporting,

exercising, applauding and tabulating results ... the enthusiasts for child study are ... like destructive sportsmen in a new country, exterminating the rare species of wild animals they find there.” The true test of excellence is what goes on in lessons and the spring in the step of the students who leave it. No student, she says, should leave a lesson the same as when s/he went in.

I took Janet to observe some classes. She enjoyed the lessons and gave feedback to the teachers in a more robust way than is easy for some to accept. She advised a math teacher that “the lesson tended to darken counsel by introducing too many difficulties at once” and told a literature teacher that she “rushed away like a charioteer leaving the weaker pupils ‘dropped off and ‘breathless.’” The lesson she liked the most was an art lesson in which all

students were encouraged to express what they closely observe in their own unique way, resulting in imaginative works of art that expressed each one’s individuality.

Each mind, she emphasised, needs to be met just where it is, with its own mental images, vocabulary, habit of thought and attention, all calling for consideration and adaptation of the subject to its own particular case. Young people, she reminded me, do not spontaneously recognise that there are different ways of learning adapted to different subjects. There is one way for multiplication tables, another for history and other for poetry. They need to be taught *how* to learn. She emphasised the importance of good

questioning. Make sure your questions are differentiated and focused, she advised. Give learners time to think and to answer. Use questions to open up new fields of thought, to check learning, to stretch learners. She also emphasised the importance of welcoming independent thought: “their positive assurance that they see to the end of things is the characteristic of their age, and it is better they should show themselves thus than through want of courage fall in with everything that is set before them. The too submissive minds are laying up trouble for the future.”

Well, there is no problem with submissive minds in *this* college, though there are many lazy or confused ones. I offer her a job. But she is getting twitchy now, missing the heavenly hunting grounds, and she gently turns it down.

As she gets ready to leave, she reminds me that the most important point is “that we ourselves should *care* about what we teach.” The best lessons are those in which the teacher has what she calls “sincerity” – an informed charisma that comes from the heart, that communicates value and inspires the person to experience within herself that “life is worth living.”

I was delighted she had dropped in. In spite of the hundred years between us, we had a lot in common, and I thought it a pity I had not met her earlier on in my career in education! I try once more, “Will you at least work in an advisory capacity, as a consultant?” She’s going to think about it. Meanwhile, her horse is getting restive and in danger of being horse-napped by the students from a rival college nearby who follow equine studies. She’s off, and I get back to work. ❖

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On being part of the story.