

Mentee’s Cross-Country Shadow Visit with Mentor Provides Meaningful Experience

reprinted from *Marquette Mentors Newsletter*, May 2022 Dan DeWeerd, Director

In March, Arts mentee Corena Smith received the Marquette Mentors travel stipend to travel to the Washington, D.C., area to meet and shadow her mentor, Dr. Mary Hunt, Arts ’72 and co-founder of WATER, the Women’s Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual. The visit was filled with many educational experiences for Corena as well as strengthening the friendship and partnership with Dr. Hunt, who has served in Marquette Mentors every year since the program was established in 2013.



“Throughout the program, she’s generously donated her time to support and connected me with so many inspiring people, which is so commendable.”

Their two days together included meeting Dr. Hunt’s colleagues at the WATER office, touring George Washington University and American University Law schools, the area’s historic sites and Marquette University’s Les Aspin Center for Government, which Corena considered a major highlight of the trip.

The pair have developed a meaningful partnership this year, so meeting for the first time enhanced the relationship on many levels, including the opportunity for Corena to see firsthand the organization Mary co-founded. “The community and network that WATER has built in 35 years is extraordinary,” Corena says.

“Having the opportunity to travel to Washington, D.C., meet Mary and address my future career goals was really meaningful,” says Corena.

WATER’s Commitment to Justice!

We affirm that all of WATER’s efforts are focused on changing the cultural and intellectual assumptions that ground discrimination, exclusion, and destruction. We gather and work in service of a vision of inclusion, equality, and justice. All are welcome.

Thank YOU, WATER Donors! You are WATER!

You make WATER programs and collaboration available to our alliance, making religious and social change worldwide based on feminist religious values without regard for anyone’s ability to pay. If we share, together we have enough.

Become a WATERgem! Give Every Month.

Join our monthly giving program and provide a steady stream of support for people who need WATER. Especially during this Covid-19 time, this convenient way to give ensures sustaining support for WATER’s life-giving programs. Donate at a level that is possible for you each month (\$10, \$25, \$50, \$100, or more) through our secure PayPal account. Click ‘Donate’ on WATER’s website at www.waterwomensalliance.org for more information.



8121 Georgia Avenue, Suite 310
Silver Spring, MD 20910, USA
301.589.2509
www.waterwomensalliance.org

Who We Are

WATER is a global interreligious network, an educational and spiritual space, a center for dialogue on feminism, faith, and justice. We connect activists, religious leaders, students, scholars, and allies who are using feminist religious values to create social and religious change. Founded in 1983 by Mary E. Hunt and Diann L. Neu, we have been empowering people to address structural violence for forty years—making WATER one of the oldest feminist religious non-profit organizations in the world.

Join the WATER community as we work toward inclusive theologies and rituals, push for social and religious change, and collaborate from inclusive perspectives. To learn more about what we do, visit us at www.waterwomensalliance.org.

Mary E. Hunt, Diann L. Neu: Co-directors | J.T. Rustad: Staff Assistant | Anali North Martin: Tech Staff | Emily Neufeld: WATERwheel Staff | Joe Scinto and Cheryl Nichols: Volunteers

WATER is a 501(c)3 organization. All donations are tax deductible. We thank you for your support.
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Rosemary Radford Ruether “In Memory of Her” By Mary E. Hunt

These remarks are adapted from an appreciation of Rosemary Radford Ruether published by the American Academy of Religion.

“If human beings are like stars, Rosemary Radford Ruether is a constellation. So many are her dimensions, so bright her light.”

That was my contribution to a collective poem organized by her friends and colleagues in 2016. Her death on May 21, 2022 in Pomona, California, means that the sky may be dimmer, but the light endures.

Rosemary Radford was born on November 2, 1936, in St. Paul, Minnesota and grew up in Washington, DC and LaJolla, CA. Her father died when she was twelve. She was raised by her mother, aunts, and her mother’s friends, so it was no wonder that she had early interest in matriarchies.

She studied Religion and Philosophy at Scripps College; Ancient History for a masters at Claremont Graduate School; and Classics and Patristics for a doctorate at CGS. She taught at numerous institutions, most notably Howard University School of Religion (1966-76) and Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary and Northwestern University (1976-2002) where, as the Georgia Harkness Professor of Applied Theology, she was the first woman to hold an endowed chair.

She taught at other institutions as well—Harvard, Yale, Princeton, and the like—but the only Catholic one was Immaculate Heart College in Los Angeles where she began her career. Rosemary was largely *persona non grata* in Catholic institutions because of her scholarship on contraception, abortion, same-sex love, and ordination of Catholic women to the priesthood, all of which are now widely accepted views among U.S. Catholics. Well after she retired, Dr. Ruether was offered a lectureship at the University of San Diego that was disgracefully rescinded. The Catholic Church’s loss was the world’s gain.

From 1965-1999, she reported “approximately 900 speaking engagements at major universities and church conventions” with “international speaking engagements and teaching” in

24 countries. I would guess that in the following 15 years of her astonishingly productive career—47 books, hundreds of chapters and articles, lectures beyond counting—those numbers jumped substantially. Many people thought she wrote easily, but she clarified that writing took time and research.

Rosemary’s early civil rights work and her decade at Howard University grounded her intersectional analysis early in her career. Anti-racism predated even some of her work on gender-focused feminism.

Her first scholarly foray into modernity, after a long immersion in the Patristic period, was occasioned by being a woman of childbearing age in a Christian denomination that banned contraception. It was not long before poverty and colonialism were in her focus; concern for Earth was always foundational.

She realized that women of color in the north and women from the global south had theological voices that were silenced or excluded and needed to be amplified. She produced anthologies, edited encyclopediae, encouraged conferences and networks, and published in the popular arena as well as in academic outlets. Her work was all in the service of empowering many voices and expressing new ideas.

Stories of her quiet, unshowy kindness are as plentiful as her publications. Many of her graduate students recount her care for them, her nurture and encouragement as they found their way through academic thickets. Women of my generation who had few role models learned from Rosemary how to be professional without being elite, how to be supportive of one another, how to keep family and friends in the foreground while engaging in a world-spanning career, and how to enjoy our work and one another. (continued on page 2)



Dissent—as Roe v. Wade Is Overturned

WATER joins in the spirit and content of the Supreme Court of the United States dissent by Justice Breyer, Justice Sotomayor, and Justice Kagan: “With sorrow—for this Court, but more, for the many millions of American women who have today lost a fundamental constitutional protection—we dissent.”

We recommit to our work for equality and justice. We join all people of good will in those efforts.
Mary E. Hunt and Diann Neu

Rosemary Radford Ruether (continued from page 1)

One of her books that invites my particular attention is *Women-Church: Theology and Practice of Feminist Liturgical Communities* (1985). It showcases the analysis and creativity that Rosemary brought to so many topics. She wrote “Christian feminists cannot wait for the institutional churches to reform themselves enough to provide the vehicles of faith and worship that women need in this time” (p. 4). So, she sketched, literally, some models.

The book includes not only the history and ecclesiology that undergird a movement of women who are “suffering from linguistic deprivation and eucharistic famine,” but also the liturgies and rituals, music and architecture (down to the blueprints) in which a new expression of an ancient (Christian) faith could be re-imagined. This work, along with the invaluable contribution of her colleague feminist biblical scholar Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (for example, *Discipleship of Equals: A Critical Feminist Ekklesia-ology of Liberation*, 1993), grounded the global exodus of many Catholic women from a patriarchal institution and offered models of inclusive, feminist ways of being religious that expanded Catholicism into a ‘catholic’ faith community focused on equality and justice.

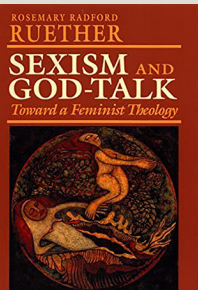
It is hard to ‘locate’, impossible to pigeonhole Rosemary who was in a class by herself. But I think of her in the ranks of Hildegard of Bingen, a 12th century Benedictine in Germany who wrote theology, music, and poetry. Rosemary was that kind of versatile—painting and gardening along with her prolific scholarship, insisting on ecology before it was fashionable, and leaving aside narrow, parochial images and symbols in favor of eclectic and aesthetically complicated ones that united rather than divided. Her WATER programs enriched us all.

Perhaps, like Hildegard, though it was hardly her aspiration, Rosemary will eventually be named a Doctor of the Church, someone who brought about a deepening of the tradition. In her characteristic modesty, I suspect she would rather be remembered as a world-class scholar and professor, a cooperative colleague, a courageous intellect, and a wonderful sister. Whatever history decides, this is how we, her contemporaries, knew and appreciated her.

In Memoriam: “In Memory of Her” by Mary E. Hunt, *American Academy of Religion*, June 10, 2022. <https://aarweb.org/AARMBR/Publications-and-News/Newsroom-/In-Memoriam-/In-Memoriam-Rosemary-R-Ruether.aspx>

Mary E. Hunt is cofounder and codirector of WATER and a student and colleague of Rosemary Radford Ruether.

Thank you, Rosemary Radford Ruether!



This thank you is adapted from a prayer tribute to Rosemary Radford Ruether for the Women’s Council: North America Presentation on Hope and Resistance in June 2022.

You claimed your Catholic faith, challenged the kyriarchy, and encouraged resistance in your many books like *Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology*.

We are indebted to you for your historical and theological scholarship and your passion for social activism.

You modeled for us how to listen to the Holy Spirit, Sophia Wisdom, and search for hope and meaning in *My Quests for Hope and Meaning: An Autobiography*.

We praise you for acting on your wisdom and calling us to do the same.

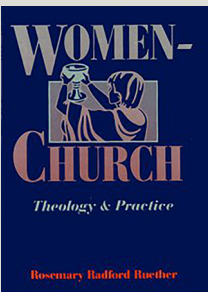
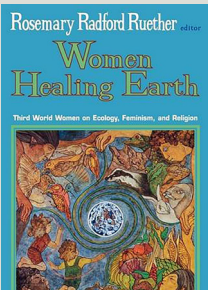
You brought together illuminating writings of Latin American, Asian, and African women in *Women Healing Earth* to address the intertwining issues of ecology, class and race, religion and its liberating elements.

We thank you for recognizing that women worldwide are in the struggles to overcome violence against women and nature, and to ensure ecological preservation and social justice.

You called us to create communities of worship and mutual support, to revision the sacraments and celebrate Eucharist, and to develop women’s liturgies in our cultural contexts in *Women-Church: Theology & Practice*.

We are women-church together!

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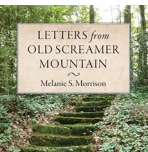
Program Highlights for Spring & Summer 2022

Thank you to all who led and participated in these Zoom programs. We had people from more than 20 countries join us! You can listen to the audio and find notes at www.waterwomensalliance.org under Programs.

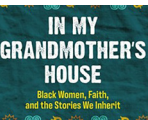
WATERtalks



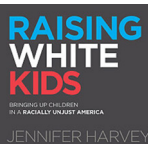
In January, **Susan Thistlewaite**, ordained minister, and President Emerita of Chicago Theological Seminary, spoke on her new book *What She Will Become*, a mystery novel that shows feminist theology in action.



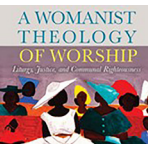
In March, **Melanie Morrison**, ordained United Church of Christ minister, talked about her book *Letters from Old Screamer Mountain* and her pilgrimage to a place where southern white writer Lillian Smith denounced white supremacy at mid-century.



In April, **Dr. Yolanda Pierce**, Professor and Dean of the Howard University School of Divinity, discussed her newest book *In My Grandmother's House: Black Women, Faith, and the Stories We Inherit*.



In May, **Jennifer Harvey**, writer, teacher, and activist who has long been engaged in racial justice and white antiracism work explored ideas from her New York Times bestseller, *Raising White Kids: Bringing Up Children in a Racially Unjust America*.



In June, **The Rev. Dr. Lisa Allen**, Emmy-award winning pastor, professor, and public theologian discussed her new book, *A Womanist Theology of Worship: Liturgy, Justice, and Communal Righteousness*.

WATERrituals with Diann L. Neu

In January, **Diann L. Neu** led a ritual titled "Step into the Pool with Sojourner Truth" where we raised up a wise African American woman by telling her story and challenging one another to step into the pool while the waters are stirring.

In February, during the ritual "Honoring the Faces of Cancer for World Cancer Day" we remembered those who have gone before us and assured those living with cancer that they are not alone.

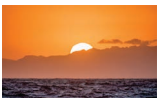
In March, “Come to Waters of Peace on World Water Day,” we celebrated by bringing attention to the importance of water and the need to safeguard it.

In April, we demonstrated support for environmental protection and climate justice in the “Earth Day Prayer.”

In May, during the ritual "Bless Us with Creative Hope," we shared our weariness, especially from the war and Covid, and prayed for peace, health, and hope.

In June, the **WATER Community** joined together to "Praise the Sun for Summer Solstice," honoring the longest day and shortest night of the year, sharing in fulfillment, passion, and creativity.

In July, during "The Saving Grace of Fun" we celebrated fun as an integral part of salvation, a human right that foreshadows the pleasure of eternal life.



WATERteas



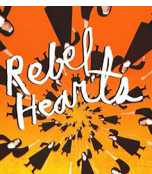
In February, **Rosemary Ganley** presented her new book *Gleanings: Columns from the Peterborough Examiner, 2018-2021*, a collection of her many varied weekly reflections on topics local to global, scientific to religious, personal to collective.



In March, we gathered for International Women’s Day on the theme of “Women’s Quest for Peace” and took the time to share what we are doing individually and collectively to bring a peaceful future.



In April, **The Rev. Dr. Kelly Brown Douglas** led a discussion of "My Name is Pauli Murray," a marvelous documentary about the life of Pauli Murray, a remarkable civil rights lawyer, Episcopal priest, and so much more.



In May, **WATER** joined the **Sisterly Group of Kirkridge Retreat Center** to discuss the acclaimed 2021 documentary "Rebel Hearts" that tells the story of the Immaculate Heart Community (IHC) and how they refused to capitulate to a patriarchal Roman Catholic Church.



In June, **Carla De Sola**, **Diana Wear**, and **David W. McCauley, Jr.** discussed Carla De Sola's new book *Dancing with the Divine: A Flow of Grace*, a collection of dancers' stories including theological reflections, designs, paintings, and photos.

WATERmeditations

In January, **Carrie Roach** shared the words of Miriam Therese Winter in her "Psalm of Grieving" with the group for contemplation.

In February, **Brad Lutz** led the session focused on "Finding Purpose and Identity in Times of Transition" using Naomi Shahib Nye's poem, "Famous," as a resource.

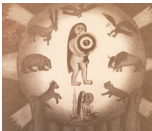
In March, **Lillian Lewis** led the session titled "Solitude in the Vault" where we looked to the wisdom of spiritual leaders who seek solitude and invite us to imagine what we want.

In April, **Jan Elsea** sparked the meditation by reading Mary Oliver's poem "Prayer" while offering her own insights.

In May, **Cynthia Tootle**, an expert on goddesses and a minister at the Takoma Metaphysical Chapel, led us in a time of reflection focused on "Sophia, Goddess of Wisdom."

In June, **Virginia Day** used the song "The World is Falling Down...Hold My Hand" by Abbey Lincoln that stirred our discussion.

In July, **Cheryl Nichols** offered the poem "The Red Brocade" by Naomi Shihab Nye as a springboard for contemplative prayer under the theme of "Hospitality."



About Rosemary Radford Ruether:

Remembrance: “Rosemary Radford Ruether was a groundbreaking feminist theologian and global sister” by Mary E. Hunt, *National Catholic Reporter*, May 24, 2022. <https://www.ncronline.org/news/opinion/rosemary-radford-ruether-was-groundbreaking-feminist-theologian-and-global-sister>

Obituary: “Rosemary Radford Ruether, a founding mother of feminist theology, has died at age 85,” *All Things Considered*, May 22, 2022. <https://www.npr.org/2022/05/22/1100596818/rosemary-radford-ruether-feminist-theologian-dies-at-age-85>

Obituary: “Rosemary Radford Ruether, Feminist Theologian, Dies at 85,” *The New York Times*, May 31, 2022. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/27/us/rosemary-radford-ruether-dead.html>

Video: Mary E. Hunt speaking on Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Circulando Juntas*, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aJaHYCtSVUA&ab_channel=CirculandoJuntas

Article: “The life of ‘scholar activist’ Rosemary Radford Ruether” by Mary E. Hunt, *National Catholic Reporter*, October 15, 2014. <https://www.ncronline.org/news/people/life-scholar-activist-rosemary-radford-ruether>