

**DIFFERENT—
BUT THE SAME GOALS**
by Sr. Hilda Carey, R.S.C.J.C.

I seem to be suffering from double vision these days. When classes began in September and sixteen students entered the classroom, I found myself wondering where the other forty were. Early on October 20th, when the community gathered in the Annex to celebrate a special Mass for Mater Admirabilis, my muscles remembered the chill of an autumn evening in the mountains and my eyes a black sky pierced by hundreds of cold white stars. And daily, when I look out the window at the burnished trees dropping away toward the blue serenity of Long Island Sound, my imagination still expects to see jagged mountains shouldering each other on the horizon.

Why these mental dislocations? Because until last July I was teaching, not at Sacred Heart in Greenwich, but at Sacred Heart in Korea. There, my English classes consisted of 39, 49 and 57 students — not blondes in plaid skirts but dark-haired, dark-eyed Korean college students. The Feast of Mater found me on our college campus located in the mountains close to the 38th parallel. And a few years ago, in company with my fellow professors, I was anguishing my way up the most famous mountain in South Korea — one on which Korea's Everest expedition practiced for its 1977 conquest of the highest peak in the world.

The autumn colors on Mt. Sorak reminded me of those of New England, but, on the surface at least, Sacred Heart in Korea is far different from Sacred Heart in Greenwich. In Korea there are about 30 R.S.C.J.'s, their ages ranging from the twenties (there are five novices) to the eighties, their nationalities from Korean, Japanese and Chinese through American and Canadian to Belgian and English. The central campus in Seoul, the nation's capital houses three communities and three educational institutions. There is a high school of nearly 800 students who start at 7:50 each day and leave school anywhere from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m., except on Saturdays, when they are free early in the afternoon. As they near graduation, the seniors must take a very stiff national college-qualifying test. Only half of those who manage to pass can find places in college, so a month later must face the entrance tests given by each college. Those who pass are lucky; the others usually study for another year (or two, or three) in the hope that one day they can enter college. Next to the high school is an elementary school which is in the process of being phased out. Next to it is an international elementary school which, with all courses taught in English, caters to the needs of the foreign community, K-6. Rubbing shoulders and throwing paper airplanes in this school are not only children from the various



Sr. Hilda Carey, r.s.c.j., with her Korean students.

embassies but also others from the most underprivileged group in Korean society: the children of mixed parentage who must face discrimination throughout their lives. Often, they are full of insecurity and hate the portion of themselves which comes from the parent who has betrayed them: if the Filipino father has deserted the Korean mother, they hate their Filipino-ness; if the Korean mother has left her American husband, they hate their Korean-ness. The school tries to help them to love themselves by offering programs on the wonders of each country. If a small German boy hears his classmates oohing and ahing over the beauties of Germany, he will probably come to appreciate himself more.

While these three schools could more than absorb the energies of thirty nuns (some of whom are retired and others not engaged in any ministry yet), there is also Sacred Heart College for Women, inconveniently located on two campuses some seventy miles apart. Once fairly small, the college is growing rapidly: the present junior and senior classes have 270 students, but the sophomores number 360 and the freshmen 580. The last mentioned, most of them boarders, are at the campus in Chun Cheon, literally carved out of the side of a mountain. The other three classes commute from Seoul to a new complex of buildings just west of the city limits. Both campuses are now bursting with the growing population they are asked to serve, and most of those bursting numbers seem to want to learn English. Of the present nine departments (there will be twelve next year) English is by far the largest — and the most in need of new teachers. Is anyone interested in a one - or two-year program in Exchange teaching?

There is one more place where you can find Sacred Heart nuns in Korea: a tiny coal mining village named Kohan. There, four of our sisters live in a two-room house doing what they can to help the miners and their families wrench a better

life out of the mountainside. One, a registered nurse, works in a tiny hospital; another, Sr. Maria Swezey from St. Louis, does home visiting during the day and teaches English at night. A third helps the parish priest and teaches dressmaking; the fourth does social work. But they can describe their life and work better than I can.

“Our initial goal is to be good neighbors, to share the lives of the people with whom we live and to be as closely identified with them as we can be, participating in the daily struggles and joys which are theirs.

“The people with whom we live are, for the most part, people who have not been able to succeed in other places and are therefore forced to live and work here. They try to make money working in the mines and then move out as soon as they are financially able, but the temptations to indulge in alcohol and gambling are great and often lead to further failure.”

The differences between Greenwich and Korea are staggering, as are those between affluent America and developing Korea, but there are many similarities as well. Among the latter are the hopes and dreams of the R.S.C.J.'s who, in Asia as in the United States, are struggling to make known to people they love very much the far greater love of Christ.

ACTION AUCTION 1979

The eighth annual Action Auction at the Convent of the Sacred Heart will take place on Saturday, April 28, 1979. Mr. and Mrs. William Shakespeare are Co-Chairmen.

Sponsored by the Parents Association, Action Auction is the one and only fund-raising event of the year and represents months of planning and hard work by the Action Auction Committee. The evening includes cocktails and dinner and a good time.

All items auctioned and sold in the boutique are donated. These can include almost anything and everything: big, small; valuable, not-so-valuable; traditional, gimmicky; animate, inanimate; movable, stationery; practical, impractical. The Committee welcomes all suggestions, ideas, donations, and volunteers.

Proceeds from Action Auction help to meet the deficit in the annual school budget, and last year netted over \$46,000.

THE GREENWICH HORIZONS

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