

Newton Closes for a Sacred Heart Sister It is not easy to discuss or comment on the end of a college where one has lived and worked for sixteen years. Memories of the past and concern for the future overwhelm one. It is not a college of buildings and classes and courses that I am thinking of. The "things" are there – the growth of the campus, the gradual appearance of dormitories, chapel student union, library, and science building - all in the space of ten years. But then the news came - that those buildings meant an insurmountable debt. The almost carefree expansion of the sixties came up against the construction of the seventies. The two decades are so very different - economically, politically, - and psychologically. But the memories are more of the young women who came to us in the early sixties, -in the later rebellious sixties, and, now, in these so-called "conservative" seventies. Somehow, I think that the faculty hoped and still hope that each woman left Newton with a desire for good solid scholarship, a sense of herself in relation to her God and her brothers and sisters and an awareness of her responsibility to serve and to love those fellow men and women. We do not know if this is true. But as our alumnae return from graduate programs in the large universities of the United States and from the homes they have set up across the country or from businesses where some, at least, are executives, we find they have caught the spirit we had tried to give them. Last year, upon hearing the news of Newton's consolidation with Boston College, one of the Seniors said' "Somethings are meant to be of high quality and short lived." I like to think that is true of Newton. I know it has been true of my years of association with the faculty and students and staff of Newton. But I have many concerns. In those early years, as the faculty discussed the implementation of SWC (Study of Western Culture), we were concerned that the four years at Newton gave each young woman time and opportunity to think through her personal and career goals - as well as experience in self-government. There were, then, and, still are, questions not so much about "feminine" identity but about personal identity. Experience in student government and in personal responsibility was accompanied always by close-knit personal friendships possible on a small campus. Each faculty member knew personally those majoring in his/her department. Truly, I think, there were some moments at least when Newton was a small Christian community of scholars young and old, students and faculty, seeking truth, searching for knowledge, and trying to live according to principles of justice, honesty and love. I hope there has been a ripple effect. How does it feel to start a department and see it grow to be one of the largest on campus? How does it feel to have a vision of psychology as a study of the whole person with religious and moral dimensions, as well as a "rats and stats"(statistics) discipline? I found it a challenge to bring my Christian commitment to a discipline which had so often considered religion to be "an obsessive compulsive neurosis" or which had only measured religious behavior and not understood religious commitment. As one by one, the small all-women's colleges close, my concern is that there will be no longer the time or the place for those young women who wish to think through their own goals and system of values in addition to preparing for a career. I hope that educational and personal values will not have to be sacrificed for economic necessity. So far, our nation has not fully faced this conflict. It will soon have to do so. I am grateful for these years at Newton and for the friends I have made among faculty, students and staff. When the name Newton College of the Sacred Heart disappears in June, its ideals and goals and the persons who tried to live them will still remain as memory and concern for me. and, I feel, for many others. Margaret Gorman. R.S.C.J. Department of Psychology, Chairman Newton College