

THAT ALL MAY BE ONE

A documentary about the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet

www.thatallmaybeone.com

SYNOPSIS:

Two Sentence Synopsis:

Where have all nuns gone? Their unusual dress made them easy to identify, but since their move to secular clothing, the sisters have become invisible. Church scandals generate headlines but acts of kindness rarely get media coverage. This story hopes to change that by examining the good work and enduring legacy of the Sisters of St. Joseph.

125-word Synopsis:

Where have all the sisters gone? Their unusual dress once made them easy to identify, but since the Second Vatican Council and the move to secular clothing, nuns have become invisible. Not so the vibrant Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, the CEOs of a religious 'Fortune 500' nonprofit corporation. Their work is a vital part of communities throughout the United States, Canada, Chile, Japan and Peru. But the number of sisters is declining. Very few young women are joining their ranks today. This story profiles the Sisters of St. Joseph in the St. Louis province and the challenges they face in sustaining their schools, hospitals and universities established when they came to America in 1836.

250-word Synopsis:

Where have all the sisters gone? Their unusual dress once made these women easy to identify, but since the Second Vatican Council and the move to secular clothing, they have become invisible. The Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet and their work are a vital part of communities throughout the United States, Canada, Chile, Japan and Peru. They are the CEOs of a religious 'Fortune 500' nonprofit corporation. This story profiles the CSJ sisters in the St. Louis province and the challenges they face in sustaining their schools, hospitals and universities established when they came to America in 1836.

The Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet were visionaries as they bought land and established their missions throughout the country. They own their Motherhouse, schools, convents, hospitals and retirement homes. Independent and self-sustaining, they are not under the direction of the diocese or Archbishop of their region. Their controversial move to independence in the 1800s made it possible for them to escape the financial problems faced by many Catholic diocese, notably the recent settlements of pedophile lawsuits. For four years, the filmmaker followed the lives and changing missions of sisters in leadership roles in the St. Louis province. This story examines how the sisters manage their operations and investments always true to their charism of serving "the dear neighbor." As their numbers decrease the documentary chronicles a disappearing way of life. In spite of the odds, these women are charming, funny, and pragmatic as they continue to make tomorrow.



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Director's Statement:

I never set out to be a documentary filmmaker. Instead, this remarkable story found me, and required a visual presence to tell it properly. So I set out on this important journey, not knowing quite where it would take me. Indeed, just the concept of nuns brings forth a torrent of emotions for any individual brought up in the Catholic Church. For students who attended Catholic parochial schools, nuns are an ever-vigilant presence of cautionary tales lurking in their subconscious. No matter how old one becomes, when confronted with one of "those looks" the receiver melts into a frightened second grader. Yet, nuns are people too and we rarely see or hear about their work or lives.

Although we have entered the 21st century, nuns continue to be shrouded in mystery. Today few sisters wear habits making it hard to even identify a nun. Only a small number continue to teach in Catholic schools. A Los Angeles Times feature article in 2000, about the declining number of sisters, inspired me to pick up a camera and tell their story before it was too late.

I was able to secure approval to shoot the documentary because of family ties: My cousin, Sister Joan Lampton, is a member of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet in St. Louis, Missouri. The order is particularly fascinating because the nuns had decided to renovate their 1840 Motherhouse on the bluffs above the Mississippi river rather than raze or abandon it. This remarkable decision represents the nuns' commitment to their dear neighbors and their ruling dictum "That All May Be One," taken from St. John's gospel. I was fortunate that a friend in the MFA film program at USC was willing to be my director of photography. My employer, California State University Northridge, supported my endeavor and we began taping in summer 2001. After three trips, 60 hours of footage, and years of post-production angst searching for the story, we completed this compelling documentary.

As the number of sisters decrease the documentary chronicles a disappearing way of life. In spite of the odds, these women are charming, funny, and pragmatic as they continue to make tomorrow. I'm honored they allowed me to tell their story.

—Karen Kearns, Director/Writer/Producer



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Press Releases:

CSUN Administrator Makes Nun Documentary

Karen Kearns, associate dean of Cal State University Northridge's Mike Curb College of Arts, Media, and Communication, recently completed a documentary film about the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet and the renovation of their motherhouse in St. Louis. Inspiration for the film came after Kearns' 2000 trip to her native St. Louis, where she visited her cousin, Sister of St. Joseph of Carondelet Joan Lampton.

Sister Lampton told Kearns of the religious community's decision to go ahead with a monumental renovation of its motherhouse built in 1840. Kearns realized the ambitious revitalization project, undertaken in a time of aging religious communities, would make a fascinating film. The 55-minute documentary, titled "That All May Be One," focuses on the restoration of the sisters' house, now used as a retreat and conference center shared with the lay community.

While the documentary also deals with the death of six of the nuns during its five years in production, it has an uplifting message of hope, since "it looks at how the work of these sisters goes on even as their numbers dwindle," said Kearns. The film has recently been screened at CSUN and Mount St. Mary's College and will be entered in several film festival competitions.

—*Tidings Online News - Friday, February 1, 2008, San Fernando Region News*

Making a Documentary-A Tale of Sacrifice, Sweat, Tears

CAMC Associate Dean's Six-Year Effort Produces 'That All May Be One,' Bound for Festivals

Anyone who has made a documentary and lived to tell the tale will describe a journey filled with sacrifice, sweat and tears. Karen Kearns, associate dean of the Curb College of Arts, Media, and Communication, has joined the throng of independent souls who have made the trip and emerged with a new understanding of the art of filmmaking.

"That All May Be One," Kearns' beautifully realized documentary about the indomitable spirit of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, was previewed at Cal State Northridge in October, and shortly after was screened at Mount St. Mary's College.

The documentary evolved after Kearns' 2000 visit to her native St. Louis. Sister Joan Lampton, Kearns' cousin and a leadership figure among the St. Joseph sisters, told the CSUN administrator of her order's decision to undertake the monumental renovation of its mother house overlooking the Mississippi, built in 1840 in a poor south St. Louis neighborhood.

Back in California, Kearns read a newspaper account of disappearing orders of Catholic sisters in the U.S. It hit her that she had a story to tell, about an order of sisters persisting at a time when others are in decline.

"In a way," Kearns said, "it was

like chronicling an endangered species. After hundreds of years, this system of sisters teaching sisters, being nurses and ministering to others is disappearing."

But though her 55-minute film deals with the death of a way of life—six of the nuns of St. Joseph died during the 2001–06 production of the documentary—it is also about hope. "It looks at how the work of these sisters goes on even as their numbers dwindle," Kearns said.

Founded in October 1650 in France, the order in 1836 sent six sisters to begin religious work in a log cabin in Carondelet, a poor Creole community of St. Louis, Mo. Under Sister Celestine Pommerel, their numbers grew to about 150 throughout the U.S. and Canada. In St. Louis, they operate one of the country's oldest schools for the deaf, a nursing home for nuns and lay people, and an all-girls high school.

Their decision to renovate rather than raze or abandon the mother house represents the nuns' respect for mission rooted in their ruling dictum "That All May Be One," taken from St. John's Gospel. The documentary observes in loving detail their restoration of the structure, now used as a retreat and conference center shared with the lay community. The camera lingers on intricate oak and walnut floors and



The mother house of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet in St. Louis, Mo.

gorgeous paneling, and on a secret floor trap door which may have been a hiding place on the Underground Railroad.

But Kearns' focus remained on the nuns themselves. One sister described her pre-Vatican II habit as "a wall" she had happily doffed, while for another it was a "visible sign" that protected her. Yet another calmly pronounced that "we are alive, we are well, we are still instigators of grace...still vital members of this neighborhood called the world." One aging, graceful sister is shown

ministering to the shut-in. "This is where the cry of the poor takes place," her voice-over narrates. "This is where we live."

To get "That All May Be One" made, Kearns "wrote it, directed it, narrated it, mixed the sound and wrote the checks," though some funding came from the Cinema and Television Arts Department. "We mixed all the sound right in my kitchen," recalled the filmmaker. "A friend brought his Mac laptop and some huge hard drives. Within eight hours, we had mixed and corrected all of it."

Some important early help came from CSUN colleagues such as music professor Elizabeth Sellers, who composed deeply felt tracks in response to Kearns' request for themes that were "lyrical and hopeful, but in a minor key" to suit the film's blend of light and dark.

CSUN art professor Magdy Rizk, music professor Katherine Ramos Baker and the CSUN Women's Choral, and Plaza del Sol Performance Hall managing director Kathy Anthony also were part of Kearns' team.

The next step for "That All May Be One" is its entry into the competitive round of film festivals. "It took nearly six years," Kearns said, "but holy cow, it's finished!" ■

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Main Credits:

IN MEMORIAM

S Mary Fitzpatrick
S Lorraine Ryan
S Mary Helen Stenson
S Stephanie Stueber
S Mary Timlin

Producer

Karen Kearns

Associate Producers

Tina Nguyen
Jhennifer Webberley

Editor

Tina Nguyen

Director of Photography

Jhennifer Webberley

Graphics

Magdy Rizk

Location Camera

Kathy Anthony
Mary Lou Omick
Andrew Webberley

Location Office Manager

Michael Hulsey

Writer and Narrator

Karen Kearns

Sound Mix

Tom Darin

Violin & Viola Solos

Sara Watts

CSUN Women's Chorale

Directed by Katherine Ramos Baker

CSJ Singers

Directed by Gretchen Wagner CSJ

Music by

Elizabeth Sellers

Director

Karen Kearns

Special Thanks to:

Kathy Anthony
Robert Bonin
Tom Darin
Michael Hulsey
Meishel Menachekanian
Jill Mittan
Kevin Mittan
Thelma Vickroy
Andrew Webberley
Jhennifer Webberley

Department of Cinema and Television Arts
California State University Northridge

KCSN-FM

Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet
St. Louis Province



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Filmmakers' Biographies:

Karen Kearns

Writer/Director/Producer

Karen Kearns is the writer/director/narrator/producer of the new feature documentary, *That All May Be One*, about the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet. This is her first video documentary feature. Before moving to Los Angeles, Kearns worked for National Public Radio in Washington, D. C. as a producer and a newscaster for *All Things Considered*, and as a news writer and announcer for *Voice of America*. She continued to freelance for NPR, VOA KCRW-FM and KOST-FM in Los Angeles. Kearns produced a radio drama version of *Mcteague*, featuring Stacy Keach, Carol Kane, Hector Elizondo, JoBeth Williams, Michael York, Katherine Helman, Ed Asner, Joe Spano, and many other well-known television and film actors for L.A. Theatre Works and KCRW-FM. As a professional voice talent and a member of AFTRA, she has created characters and narrated series and spots for NBC's *Passions*, PBS, NPR, American Medical Productions, the Japanese American Museum, and the Museum of the Rockies. Kearns' audio and video work have received numerous awards, including a Peabody, a Golden Mike, several CINDYs, and a TELLY. She is a member of Women in Film and the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences. Kearns has a M.A. in Communication Arts and Journalism from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and a M.A. in Speech Communication from Southern Illinois University. She is Associate Dean of the Mike Curb College of Arts, Media and Communication at California State University Northridge.

Tina Nguyen

Associate Producer/Editor

Tina Nguyen's passion for editing documentaries began with "Bilalian," a documentary feature about African-American Muslims. "Bilalian" won awards in 2002 at the Pan-African Film Festival and the Dahlonga International Film Festival and has been aired by BET. Since her editing career started with her work on the indie narrative feature "B-Movie" in 1997 as an assistant editor and visual effects coordinator, she has enjoyed working on a variety of narrative, documentary and commercial projects. Her commercial credits include working on campaigns for Nokia, Nexus, Fox and Apple. She received her B.A. with honors in film from Vassar College. She currently lives in Los Angeles.

Jennifer Webberley

Associate Producer/Director of Photography

Jennifer Webberley is a founding member of Metamorphic Productions, Webberley has an MFA (Magna Cum Laude) in Film and Television Production from the USC School of Cinema-Television and a BA (Cum Laude) in Comprehensive Theatre from California State University, Northridge. She is also a graduate of the American Academy of Dramatic Arts. She is a member of IFP West, the International Documentary Association and Women in Film. Webberley is presently a writer for Red Star Comics. During her studies at USC, Webberley worked on numerous short films as director, producer and editor. In 2002, she produced and edited the 35mm short film *Winded*, which screened at the 2003 Los Angeles MethodFest Film Festival, the Boston Film Festival and the Miami International Film Festival, among others. Webberley co-produced the short documentary *In Between Days*, which won the Best Short Documentary award at the 2001 South By Southwest Film Festival and edited *Karma, Incorporated*. Webberley has extensive theater managerial experience as Operations Manager for the Performing Arts Center at California State University Northridge and as Research And Development (R&D) Administrative Manager for Electronic Theatre Controls, Inc. (ETC) in Hollywood. She is currently pursuing an MBA degree at Pepperdine University.



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Filmmakers' Biographies:

Elizabeth Sellers

Composer

Elizabeth Sellers musical work is in demand. She composed, orchestrated and conducted the score and title song for the independent feature *UnBowed*, which premiered in Hollywood, won festival awards and aired on cable TV. Sellers received Primetime Emmy honors for contributing to the Emmy Award winning achievement of Outstanding Music Direction for the 2002 Winter Olympics. She arranged, orchestrated and conducted the music for *The Lost Player's Rapunzel*, running for six weeks at the San Diego Repertory Theatre in summer of 2005. A concert work for solo classical guitar was featured at the Aalborg International Guitar Festival in Denmark in fall, 2005. The Montana Shakespeare Company commissioned an underscore for a summer 2006 production of *Hamlet*. Sellers's documentary scores include *Women Behind the Camera* and *Say Something Funny*. *The Women Behind the Camera* has been winning awards in international festivals with screenings in Potsdam and Dhaka International Film Festival. She holds degrees with honors in Theory and Composition from St. Olaf College and in Orchestra Conducting from Northwestern University and has studied film scoring at USC. Sellers is the Director of the Media Composition Option for the Music Department at California State University, Northridge. Her graduates have won local, national and international awards and her work was featured in *Film Music Magazine*.

www.elizabethsellersmusic.com

Magdy Rizk

Graphics

Magdy Rizk was born in Cairo, Egypt in 1965. His family moved to the United States in 1969. His art background was influenced by his mother's oil paintings. His love of art and design came into focus later as an undergraduate at California State University, Northridge. Rizk has a B.A in Graphic Design. from California State University, Northridge and an M.FA in Graphic Design from California State University, Los Angeles. Some of his past and present clients include Mattel Toys, Ernst & Young, Fox Entertainment, Nova Development, Winway Incorporated, Scala Incorporated and California State University, Los Angeles.

Tom Darin

Sound Mix

Tom Darin graduated from California State University, Northridge with a B.A. in Television Broadcasting. He went on to become the Television Engineer for the CSUN Cinema and Television Arts Department and helped design and build Manzanita Hall, a state-of-the-art film and television production facility. In 2005, he became the DodgerVision producer for the Los Angeles Dodgers where he is responsible for creating all content shown in the ballpark during Dodger baseball games. In his spare time he is a musician and plays a mean trumpet.

