

Interviewer: Mary, thank you so much for being interviewed. If you could just say your name.

Mary: Sure, Mary, my middle name is Elizabeth, and Hunt, H-U-N-T.

Interviewer: Thank you. And are you lay or clergy?

Mary: Well since I'm a Catholic woman, I am like all Catholic women, lay.

Interviewer: Yes, yes.

Mary: Even those who are nuns are lay.

Interviewer: Yeah, exactly. Where did you go to school? Graduate or Divinity School?

Mary: Initially I went to Marquette University undergraduate, and then I went to Harvard Divinity School for a Masters in Theological Studies. I went to the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley for a doctorate, and I went to the Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley for an MDiv.

Interviewer: Wonderful. Very good. What work or ministry were you doing at the time of Reimagining?

Mary: The same I'm doing now. I am the co-director of WATER, the Woman's Alliance for Theology, Ethics, and Ritual, which is a small non-profit inside the beltway in Washington D.C. area. We're actually in Silver Spring, Maryland. And we work on feminist issues in religion. And I started WATER along with Diann Neu in the early 80's, so by that time, perhaps the mid 80's. But we were at WATER at the time of the Reimagining Conference.

Interviewer: Yes, and still are. That's great. When and where were you born, Mary?

Mary: I was born in June 1951 in Syracuse, New York.

Interviewer: Okay, great. How and when did you first become aware of Feminist Theology?

Mary: Well I was a student in a Catholic school in high school in Syracuse, and I became aware not of Feminist Theology, but of feminist issues in religion then. I remember distinctly a priest telling me with great conviction that women couldn't be priests. And I think that sparked my interest in how wrong he was and so that was in the mid 60's. When I went to college at Marquette, there were, as far as I recall, no women faculty, maybe a couple of, there were women graduate students, maybe one of whom became a faculty member eventually, but, there were no women faculty in the Theology Department. And there was no talk of Feminist Theology, but I finished Marquette in 1972 and then went to Harvard Divinity School, and it was

there in 1972 that I met Rosemary Radford Ruether, who was the still then professor for a year at Harvard Divinity School and she was working on feminist issues in religion and so that was my entry.

Interviewer: Mm hmm. And from what you said it sounded like you resonated with it immediately? How did you react?

Mary: No, I didn't actually. I was, there were a number, my cohort at Harvard Divinity School in the early 70's was the first cohort of appreciable numbers of women and there had been women students of the Divinity School before that, but in terms of appreciable numbers together, kind of a critical mass, my group, my incoming class, maybe the following class, maybe the class behind us, that cohort formed the first critical mass of women at Harvard Divinity School. And so, I was initially skeptical. First of all, I was Catholic, so I hadn't really thought about ministry, as an option. I had always thought about the study of Theology as a kind of academic project that one did because it was interesting, not because it had any practical value, although I was very interested in social justice issues. But I just hadn't made the connection. And then, then at Harvard Divinity School, the women, including people like Emily Culpepper and Linda Barrett Fall, and some of the really wonderful pioneer women, and of course we had Mary Daly over at Boston College at that time, began to try to school the professors in how to use inclusive language. It was a famous, I think it was written up in Time Magazine, it was before my time, but, the year before, but I think there was a famous incident when they threw M&M's at Harvey Cox to get him to use inclusive language. If he got it right, he got an M&M, and if he didn't, he didn't get an M&M. So, there were these tactics, these guerrilla tactics, and I was rather put off by it initially. I thought it was all nonsense and went back to the dorm and put a dress on and went back to class. That lasted about a day and then I began to see how wrong I was and how right they were. And from then on, of course, I was quite a committed feminist. And that would've been 72, 73.

Interviewer: Yeah. Oh that's a great story.

Mary: Well before-

Interviewer: I missed the end of it, well before?

Mary: Well before Reimagining.

Interviewer: Well before Reimagining, yes. The internet connection seems to be a little bit iffy. Are you having any problems at your end?

Mary: I'm not, but I can imagine we are. If it turns out to be iffy, we can just go the phone.

Interviewer: Good. Good. I'll keep monitoring it. Thank you, Mary.

Mary: If it's not working, let's just go to the phone. It's not worth, you know, it's not worth, if you don't get what you need it's not worth it.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah. Well you know, just to be safe, maybe we should do that. Do you mind if I, do I call you at your WATER number? Is that correct?

Mary: Sure.

Interviewer: Okay, good. Then I'll call you right back. Because I don't want to miss any of this. Thank you.

Interviewer: Alright, bye-bye.

Mary: Bye.