

VISION

THE SISTERS OF CHARITY OF NEW YORK

Living Lives of Love

Volume 19 • Issue 2 • Spring 2015



**Celebrating
the Year of
Consecrated Life**

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SISTERS
of CHARITY
NEW YORK



Congregation Gathers for Assembly 2015
Elects New Leadership Team



Letter from the President

Dear Friends,

At the opening conference of the Congregation's first retreat, Elizabeth Ann Seton prayed that we, the Sisters of Charity, might be "sanctified in the truth." Elizabeth prays for us as Jesus does for his disciples:

"Consecrate them in the truth.
Your word is the truth.
I consecrate myself for them
that they also may be consecrated in the truth."

John 17: 17-19

Jesus goes on to say that we are the Father's gift to Him. He so desires that we be with Him where He is, that is, in the communion of love.

This is Jesus' prayer for all of us—that we may truly live the gift each of us is.

During this Year of Consecrated Life, Mother Seton's prayer takes on a deeper meaning for our Sisters, Associates, and Companions of Charity, as well as for you, our dear friends and benefactors.

As Sisters of Charity committed to the mission of Jesus, our vows call us to be where Jesus is—with the poor and marginalized. We desire to constantly reveal God's love.

This year has been a gift for us, to reflect on our lives and ministry together and to know and trust that we are all called to be where Jesus is. Let us rejoice in the gift that is ours.

Peace,

Jane Iannucelli, SC
President

Cover photos: Sisters, Associates, and Companions gathered in General Assembly to set directions for the next four years in Congregation life and elect new leaders.

(Top left photo) Newly elected Sisters of Charity Leadership, from left to right: Regional Coordinators Sisters Mary Ann Daly and Mary Ellen McGovern; Sr. Jane Iannucelli, President; Sr. Margaret O'Brien, Assistant to the President; Regional Coordinators Sisters Kathleen Byrnes and Sheila Brosnan.

(Top right photo) Upon Sr. Jane Iannucelli's re-election, Sr. Catherine Cleary, PBVM, Vicar for Religious for the Archdiocese of New York, received her consent to serve as President of the Congregation.

VISION enables the Sisters of Charity of New York to make a cohesive statement about how we reveal God's love in our lives and the many and varied ways in which we respond to the signs of the times.



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In this special year, from my home in Eternity, allow me to share what consecrated life means to me. I begin my story as a Episcopalian teenager, living with relatives in New Rochelle. I used to long for *such places in America as I read of in novels where people could be shut up from the world, and pray, and be good always*. Such were my romantic ideas about running away to a convent in a far-off country, though I had never met a real nun.

The seeds of my vocation were sown in my Episcopal faith, which I loved. I read the Bible, prayed the Psalms, especially Psalm 23, made home visits to poor women and children, and loved to receive the Communion, which we then understood as a spiritual memorial of Christ's body and blood. Later, in Italy when I encountered the Catholic belief that Christ is really present in the Sacrament, I was immediately drawn to Christ's Presence. That experience started a soul-journey that would be even more difficult than the arduous voyage to Italy.



How could that be? I wondered. My primary responsibility as a mother was to my five children. Then Providence (in the person of Father Dubourg) led me to bring my family to Baltimore where I started a small school for girls, and where my sons could be educated.

The priests who advised me (I now realize) had a wider vision than mine. They saw that God had *destined [me] to forward the progress of His Holy Faith* in this young country. I would be *the mother of many daughters*. In that peaceful Baltimore setting, several young women came to join me in my life of service and prayer. A benefactor gave us money to buy property in rural Emmitsburg where we moved in 1809. And so, little by little, the first religious community for women founded in the United States was born—the Sisters of Charity of St. Joseph's.

For our Rule, our way of life, my advisers suggested that we use the one created by Saints

YEAR OF CONSECRATED LIFE—*My Story*

By St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, as told by Regina Bechtle, SC

When I sailed back to New York, I was a 29-year-old widow with five small children and with wonderings about becoming a Catholic. I struggled for almost a year, telling my friend Julia Scott *a cave or a desert would best satisfy my natural desire*. When God's grace finally led me to join the Catholic Church and to receive my beloved Lord in Communion, I found peace.

Prosperity was another story. It didn't take long for me to realize that joining a Church of mostly poor immigrants would create a rift with many among my society-minded family and friends. As I tried to find a way to support my family in New York and worried about the future, my faithful God boosted my spirits and opened a way.

Ever since my beloved William died and I became a Catholic, I had cherished a dream that I shared with Archbishop John Carroll. I wrote him that *embracing a religious life has been... so much my hope and consolation* that I would have crossed the ocean again to pursue it, never imagining that it could happen in this country. Nor did I imagine that I was destined to play a major role in starting it.

Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac for the Daughters of Charity in seventeenth-century France. They told the simple village girls who came to help the poor of Paris: "Your chapel is the parish church, your veil is holy modesty, your cloister, the streets of the city." I very much liked that approach to God and God's people. It gave us the flexibility to meet the needs of a growing church of mostly poor immigrants in our fledgling nation.

Since education for girls was a pressing need, I made sure we included that mission as one of our community's main purposes. As Sisters of Charity, we committed ourselves to provide every service in our power to those in need, to seek to live a holy life, and to cultivate a spirit of humility, simplicity, and charity. Unlike nuns in a cloister, our life took us into the everyday world of people's hopes and sufferings, where we met Jesus Christ in the person of those most in need. We took yearly vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience and modeled our lives on the charity of Christ, who healed, taught, and

Continued, see page 12



The Seton Service and Leadership Program at the College of Mount Saint Vincent Graduates its First Group of Scholarship Students

Maryellen Blumlein, SC

Begun in the Fall semester of 2011, the Seton Service and Leadership Program, sponsored by the Sisters of Charity, provides a full room and board scholarship to students who have an outstanding academic profile, have demonstrated community service, and possess leadership skills. One student, who began the program in her sophomore year, graduated in May of 2014. The 2015 graduating class included the first group of students who have been involved in the SSLP for all four years of their college career. They are Adam Derouin, Amy Fox, Celine Florentino, Ciara Rene Rosa, Marisa Rosario, and James Wilkins. The objective of the Seton Service and Leadership Program is for students to become greater servant leaders in the spirit of Saints Vincent de Paul and Elizabeth Ann Seton, while pursuing academic excellence, community development, and an ongoing commitment to service.

The SSLP was begun and continues to be sponsored by the Sisters of Charity. The Sisters founded the College of Mount Saint Vincent in 1911 and continue to sponsor the school today. The students who are part of the SSLP begin to form a faith-sharing community in their first year, and as their awareness of the needs around them continues to grow throughout their time at CMSV, so does their awareness of their spirituality and need for prayer and reflection. They meet on a regular basis to reflect on their experiences and to share theological discussions. They attend one-day and week-end retreats. They are involved in many on-campus activities, as well as participating in projects such as Midnight Runs, Habitat for Humanity, and working in soup kitchens and food pantries.

Above, from left to right: Adam Derouin, Celine Florentino, Ciara Rosa, James Wilkins, Marisa Rosario, Matthew Shields (Program Director), Shannon Koch (Class of 2014), and Amy Fox in this 2011 photo taken at a Project Hospitality event.

They have attended overnights at Sisters Hill Farm, working in the fields and helping distribute the shares of vegetables during the growing season.

Over the course of the four years the students have developed relationships with the Sisters of Charity at Mount Saint Vincent Convent, the Convent of Mary the Queen, and the new retirement residences at JHL (Jewish Home Lifecare) in the Bronx. They have shared “Supper with the Sisters,” given manicures at Mary the Queen and JHL, made sandwiches for the Midnight Runs together, and shared conversations and good times. The Sisters look forward to the students’ coming, and the students are glad to visit the Sisters.

This is a relationship of mutual sharing, learning, and experiencing one another in the best possible ways. All of the SSLP students develop relationships with each other and strong bonds with the four adults with whom they work in Campus Ministry: Matt Shields, Kat O’Loughlin, Father Chris, and Sr. Mary Lou McGrath. These four help the students begin their college careers with hope and joy and maintain that outlook throughout their four years and beyond.

The six seniors who will graduate in May have given over 3000 hours of combined volunteer service during their time here at the Mount—and this is just what is recorded. Undoubtedly many other activities took place without records of the number of hours spent in the process. When, as seniors



Just as she did at Mount Saint Vincent Convent, Sr. Helen Scoltock serves as altar server and sacristan at JHL.



Fr. Chris Keenan, OFM, frequently presides at JHL Masses.



Sr. Regina Bechtle administers Communion to Sr. Marian Lascell.

Retired Sisters Carry the Mission to Their New Homes Patricia McGowan, SC

During this Year of Consecrated Life, a number of our senior Sisters have discovered a new way to continue their mission of Prayer and Witness at Elizabeth's Place and Kittay House. If you had asked any of these forty-one Sisters a year ago about how this would happen, they probably would have been at a loss to explain. Previously, they ministered as educators, nurses, and social workers. Today, as Sr. Angela Rooney (age 98) says, they "bring joy to so many new people" who live with them at the Jewish Home Lifecare complex in the Kingsbridge area of the Bronx.

And the Sisters feel "very joyous" says Sr. Angela, when they can say "God bless you. Have a lovely day" to so many people who previously might have had very little contact with Sisters. That "simple greeting" might perhaps make one of these people more aware of God in their life, even if only for a brief minute.

The traditional plaques of God Is Love and Humility, Simplicity, and

Charity that are on the walls in every Sisters of Charity Convent, as reminders of our reason for being, also adorn the walls in these "new" convents. During the six months that the Sisters have lived there, they have come to realize anew the importance of these words and their significance to our mission of prayer and witness.

At Kittay, Sr. Doris Pagano asks "What kind of witness are we giving?" For some this is accomplished with a simple smile; for others it is by listening reverently to those residents who seem sad or who do not seem to have any visitors.

Still, Sr. Constance Brennan sees "loads of possibilities" for an apostolate with the residents at large and also with the staff. "The longer we are here and the more group activities we attend, the more people will learn from us and, certainly, the more they will give to us."

One of those learning experiences most likely occurred at the St. Patrick's Day celebration when Sr. Irene Breheny

in her habit stole the show with a lovely rendition of Galway Bay. The residents were so enthralled that they whipped out their cell phones and started to record her. Who knows? That little nun may be the next sensation on YouTube or Twitter.

For Sr. Margaret Hannon, the greatest witness is given every day when the Sisters from both buildings join the larger group at Mass at Kittay. That, along with living on the same floor as the chapel, makes her "so grateful" for being able to continue her prayer life in such an easy manner at her age. "I never thought my last years would be spent living among so many lay people," she says, "but it truly is a blessing and I truly believe we do make a difference in their lives."



St. Elizabeth statue in the hallway at Elizabeth's Place.

Continued, see page 14, bottom right

Chapel at Kittay House



From left: Sisters Margaret Smith, Marian Bishop and Cecilia Reeves dine with a fellow resident at Elizabeth's Place.

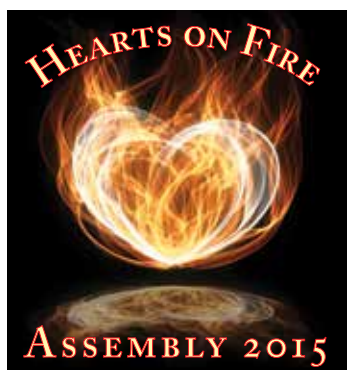
Chapel at Elizabeth's Place





Congregation Gathers for Assembly 2015 *Elects New Leadership Team*

Assembly Communications Team

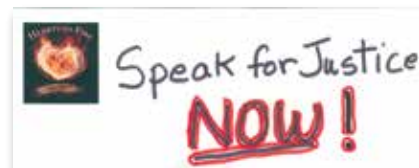


With the theme of “hearts on fire,” the Sisters of Charity of New York, Associates, and Companions gathered in Tarrytown, NY, for Assembly 2015 on April 7, 2015 with

the purpose of setting direction statements that will guide the next four years of Congregation life and electing a new Leadership Team.

With 120 delegates present, Sister Jane Iannucelli, SC, was re-elected to serve a second four-year term as President on April 11. Representing Cardinal Dolan, Sister Catherine Cleary, PBVM, Vicar for Religious, witnessed the election and received Sister Jane’s consent to serve as President of the Congregation. Sister Margaret O’Brien, SC, who currently serves as Treasurer, will serve as Assistant to the President.

Four Regional Coordinators were also elected by the delegates; Sisters



To stimulate ideas, the Congregation spoke about words to express global concerns and, perhaps, generate a “bumper sticker.” The winning entry by Table 3 was “Speak for Justice NOW!”

Mary Ellen McGovern, Sheila Brosnan, Mary Ann Daly, and Kathleen Byrnes, will serve four-year terms. Elections for Regional Coordinators were conducted on April 11 and 12.

Sister Dominica Rocchio, who will complete eight years of service

The opening ceremony paid tribute to seven Sisters of Charity on whose shoulders the Congregation stands today: St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Mother Elizabeth Boyle, Sr. Mary Ulrica O’Reilly and Companions who cared for Civil War soldiers, Sr. Mary Irene Fitzgibbon, Mother Loretto Bernard Beagan, Sr. Margaret Dowling, and Sr. Immaculata Burke.

Below: Sr. Miriam Kevin Phillips, Secretary of the Congregation, presented the ceremonial bouquet that represented the “hearts on fire.” She then called the name of each Sister in attendance.

Below right: The Rev. Frank Gargani presided over a lively and enthusiastic liturgy before the first full day of Assembly.





Above left: Born from the Life Experience and Faith Sharing ministry, the Daughters of LEFSA performed for the Congregation on the first night of Assembly. **Above middle:** Tara Robinson, leader of the singing group and daughter of LEFSA Team Member James Addison, with Sr. Jane Iannucelli.

Above: Sr. Alice Darragh (left) presented the Sisters of Charity Constitution; Maureen Russell, Coordinator of Associates, presented the Associate Manual; Sisters Mary Carmel Craig (left) and Eucharistia Corrigan presented the Eucharistic gifts. Rev. Michael Marigliano, OFM, presided.

as Regional Coordinator on June 30, reflected on the process of electing new leadership. "Electing leaders in a congregation is an exciting, deliberate, and prayerful experience. The election is always framed in light of the realities of the world, church, and congregation. The question then is what are the specific qualities and abilities needed in congregation leadership for the coming years? The question is answered by delegates who reflect on the realities and choose the appropriate leaders."

As is the tradition of the Congregation, the women who are elected to leadership come from a pool of Sisters who were invited to consider leadership by other Sisters in the congregation.

DIRECTION CALLS

Prior to elections, the Congregation established direction calls that will guide implementation once the new Leadership Team takes office.

From the Call to Mission

The entire Congregation and all associated with us are called:

- » to continue to ignite and sustain our gospel mission with those who are living in poverty and on the margins;
- » to speak and act with urgency for justice on behalf of our suffering world.

From the Call to Community & Membership

The Congregation is called:

- » to engage with the ever widening communities of which we are a part and to open ourselves to the possibility of new relationships.

From the Call to Governance & Leadership

For the sake of the Mission and the common good, the Congregation calls itself:

- » to intentionally develop and prepare a pool of potential leaders for future congregational leadership.

Values that will guide the implementation of these calls include: good communication, mutual accountability, trust, transparency, contemplative conversations, communal discernment, fidelity to the Constitution, and prayer.

On Sunday, April 12, the newly elected President and Council were called to the stage and the Assembly blessed them with arms outstretched singing the Magnificat. Assembly 2015 closed with a prayer service and a renewed spirit for the future that lies ahead.

In the tradition of the Congregation, a prayer service and Transfer of Leadership ceremony will take place on June 30 in the Chapel of the Immaculate Conception at Mount Saint Vincent. The new Leadership Team takes office on July 1.

Below: The Congregation thanked the current Leadership Team. From left, Sisters Mary Ann Daly, Jane Iannucelli, Eileen McGrory, Dominica Rocchio, and Kathleen Byrnes. Sr. Dominica completed two terms as Regional Coordinator; Sr. Eileen completed one term as Assistant to the President.

Below: The Congregation showed their appreciation to the kitchen and wait staff for the wonderful service and excellent food during the entire Assembly.





Right: Sr. Marie Morris, right, serves as Quality Assurance Leader at the John Coleman School, a Sisters of Charity sponsored ministry. The school has two campuses; one in the Seton Pediatric Center in Yonkers, the other in White Plains.



Below: Under the guidance of Sr. Virginia Searing, the Barbara Ford Peacebuilding Center, located in Santa Cruz del Quiché, promotes integrated human and spiritual development by offering programs of all types: social, spiritual, educational, and cultural. Sr. Virginia is shown here with a support group for young mothers who have been victimized. Sisters Nora Cunningham, Gloria De Artega, and Rosenda Castañeda Gonzalez serve in formation ministry in Guatemala.



Above right: Sr. Maria Iglesias serves as Director of Pastoral Care at the Elizabeth Seton Pediatric Center in Yonkers. The sponsored ministry is home to 137 medically fragile children.



Below: The Congregation welcomed friends and neighbors to pray the Rosary for Peace on May 3, 2015 at the Lourdes Grotto at Mount Saint Vincent. Sisters Mary McCormick, John Jimenez, and Maryellen Blumlein led the prayers.



Sr. Miriam Gabriel Obraz is Principal at St. Elizabeth Seton School in Shrub Oak, NY.



Below: Sr. Mary Ann Garisto is the Director of Sisters Hill Farm, a Community Supported Agriculture farm sponsored by the Congregation in Standfordville, NY. Every week 235 shareholders pick up their organic, fresh produce at the farm or at Mount Saint Vincent. Ten percent of the harvest is donated to those in need every week.





Above: Sr. Marie Tolle serves refreshments to expectant mothers at the medical clinic in Ixtahuacan, Guatemala, one of four clinics in the region. In conjunction with the Diocese of Spokane, WA, the Congregation has been ministering to the people of Guatemala in the medical clinics since 1971. Sr. Marie and Sr. Ceil Harriendorf prepare lay catechists and Eucharistic ministers in Pacaxom, where the benefactors of the Sisters of Charity helped to build the local church and a preschool.



Above: Sr. Donna Dodge, right, with Seton Village resident Helen Gorman. Sr. Donna is Director of the Sisters of Charity Housing and Development Corporation, which provides housing to seniors, mental health residents, and others in need. SC Housing currently has 625 units with 809 residents.

THE WORLD! Sacred Life Ministry

Right: The works of sculptors Sr. Margaret Beaudette (pictured at right) and Sr. Kathleen Aucoin grace churches, hospitals, shrines, and universities across the U.S. They also are found in Bermuda, Canada, Haiti, South Korea, and Lourdes, France. Sr. Margaret is shown here working on *The Sorrowful Mother*.



Above: The office of Peace, Justice, and Integrity of Creation assists the Congregation, Sisters, and Associates, corporately and individually, to witness in varied ways through increased awareness, prayer, presence, education, advocacy, and systemic change. Sr. Carol De Angelo (third from right) serves as director.



Left: Sr. Nancy McNamara teaches English language classes at the Project L.I.G.H.T. ESL program. Sr. Mary Kay Finneran serves as Director of the program.



Above: Sr. Mary Lou McGrath heads the Charity in the City program, wherein young women work in varied Sisters of Charity ministries for one week every summer.



*"... they, or we, did not know
the change this would make
in their lives."*

Seton Service & Leadership Program

Continued from page 4

in high school, Adam, Amy, Celine, Ciara, Marisa, and Jimmy applied for and received the Seton Service and Leadership Program Scholarship for free room and board at CMSV, they, or we, did not know the change this would make in their lives. Each student has grown into a mature, faith-filled young adult who is willing to go forth into the world, as did the early Sisters of Charity, to serve every need in their power.

Meet the Students

Adam Derouin has volunteered at LEFSA (a program to help the homeless) for two years, worked on Habitat for Humanity, the Hudson River Sweep, and Box City to name but a few of the projects in which he has been involved. "I really appreciate being chosen for this scholarship because, without it, I would not have been able to attend CMSV. I appreciate how much faith was put in me to fulfill my obligations and I hope that I was able to make the people who chose me for this scholarship feel like they made the right choice."

Amy Fox has been involved in many volunteer activities: working on an inpatient adolescent unit in a psychiatric hospital, at the Hebrew Home for the Aged, at St. Peter's Afterschool program and the

Marisa, Adam, Ciara, and James together with other Campus Ministry Student Leaders and Fr. Chris Keenan, OSF, (right) at the annual Student Affairs Award Ceremony.

Park Lodge afterschool program, both in Yonkers, and as the coordinator of the "Beautiful Me" self-esteem program, as well as many programs with the Sisters of Charity. She would like to thank the Sisters of Charity, Campus Ministry, Dr. Tracy Prout, and Dr. Samithra Ravaghan for all the opportunities they provided for her. Of her career choice to become a social worker she says, "Poverty has direct and indirect effects on psychological, emotional, social, behavioral, and health problems. I am eager to work toward creating economic and social justice regardless of where my actual job is."

Celine Florentino has been involved in Campus Ministry for three years and the Calvary Chapel Old Bridge for two years as well as other projects on and off campus. Celine says, "I'm very appreciative of the opportunities that were open to me with the help of the SSLP. I'm also thankful for the flexibility in the type of volunteer opportunities I could pursue within meeting the requirements of SSLP."

Ciara Rene Rosa volunteered at LEFSA for three and a half years. She was also involved in other on-campus volunteer experiences. While she knows graduation is a happy time, Ciara says, "I actually feel incredibly sad to leave this wonderful college. I believe the sadness

I, and many other students, feel about our upcoming graduation demonstrates what a wonderful school CMSV is."

Marisa Rosario has been involved in the Fountain of Eternal Life Worship Team for the last three years, LEFSA, the nursing service trip to Guatemala, and various other short-term projects both on-campus and in her church. Marisa is most grateful to Matt Shields for all of his hard work and guidance. She intends to pursue a career as a nurse, wishing to help people in need of healthcare in underserved areas. She would also like to continue to do service for people in other countries.

James Wilkins worked in the afterschool program at Our Lady of Angels School in the Bronx for one year, LEFSA for three years, and helped the sisters set up Smith Hall for monthly meetings for four years. He was also involved in other projects on campus. James is grateful to all of his communications and management professors, Matt Shields, and Father Chris. After graduation James would like to work in the communications field as either a sports broadcaster or sports writer. Of his time here at CMSV, James states, "It has been quite the journey ... as I come to the end I believe it has made me stronger and a better version of myself."

YEAR OF CONSECRATED LIFE

We asked our Sisters to answer one of two questions: (1) What does it mean to you to be a Sisters of Charity? (2) Is there any one event that made you feel most like a Sister of Charity? Here are some of the answers. We hope to offer more responses during this Year of Consecrated Life.



I am happy to be a Sister of Charity because it frees me to be a “sister” to all I meet.

Sr. Anne
Denise
Brennan



I believe the seeds of my vocation were planted by the faith of my family and by the Sisters of Charity who witnessed to me the possibility of living a life of consecrated service in community.

I saw how the Sisters truly cared for us, but

I was most taken with their loving way of relating to one another. “Sister” was a relationship, not a title. My parents did not exactly jump for joy when I told them I wanted to become a Sister, but let me follow the leaning of my heart. I joined the community five years before the start of Vatican II, little realizing how soon afterwards my congregation was going to change radically. There was a “thrill of hope” in the community as we sought to respond to the signs of our times as the Council documents encouraged us to do. After pronouncing my first vows I was sent “on mission” to several elementary and high schools in the New York area. Missionary work followed: in Arizona among the Navajo and Hopi Indians, and for a longer time in Nassau, Bahamas.

When I returned to the States I became a member of our Formation



Team, companioning women who wished to explore vowed membership with us. I was then elected to congregational leadership for eight challenging years. And now I have come to a new moment of ministry as a spiritual and retreat director, writer, and presenter on topics of spirituality and my own Charity charism, a blessed place to be!

Sr. Mary E. McCormick



In the Sisters of Charity who taught me in high school, I recognized a concern for the poor, a love for learning, and professional excellence. There are probably other subtle reasons why I chose to be the first of my five siblings to leave home and go to Mount Saint Vincent, NY, to embark on this wonderful journey of religious life. However, the closest I came to being “called by God” was a sustained inner sense that God was calling me to greatness, and that religious life



might be the best way for me to go. The deep sense of call to the Sisters of Charity was a constant. Over the years, as I have prayed and tried to live a Gospel life, my

friendship and identification with Jesus has grown stronger. In times when I have been unable to pray, I have leaned on people of faith to do that for me.

Sr. Sheila Brosnan



I cannot remember a time when I did not want to be “a Sister,” as we would say. I loved my teachers and what drew me most firmly into walking in this way was how they loved one another, how they enjoyed being with us children



and we with them. A number of my Canadian family are priests, religious, and oblates; I come from a very “religious” family. What keeps me in religious life? I

am loved by Love; and I will be faithful to the commitment to fulfill the mission of Jesus in the Gospel in my lifetime: to strive to be open to the Spirit. Our Elizabeth Seton tells us to “meet our grace” in every circumstance.

Sr. Kathleen Aucoin



One time when I felt most like a Sister of Charity is difficult to identify. My life orientation is a whole fabric of relationships with people,



relating to world events, and relating to our dear Earth. Times of difficulty that call for compassion make me most aware that I am a Sister of Charity. I think, I wonder, I ask, “What can I do to help?” Often, reflecting after an event I realize how amazing it is to be a Sister to a person in distress. Consoling family members of patients who died suddenly; sitting beside the bed of a dying patient with no friends or family; at an outdoor candlelight vigil each December 21 to pray for and remember those who died on the streets; caring for those hurt or lost in the attack on the World Trade Center; nursing anyone, children with special needs, newborns, suddenly ill 30-somethings; praying at home alone and with the four amazing women with whom I share community life. As I touch and recall the needs of the world, my sisters and brothers, near and far, I feel most like a Sister of Charity.

Sr. Karen Helfenstein

With Love and Appreciation We Remember...

Please visit our website at www.scny.org/news for complete biographies of our Sisters

Sister Maria Therese Ruckel, SC

Entered: 1940 + Date of Death: 12/17/14 + Age: 92

Sister Therese began her life-long ministry of education teaching in elementary grades. After eleven years she transitioned to teaching high school grades, where she devoted forty-four years. Her longest mission was in Saint Joseph by the Sea on Staten Island where she served from 1978 until 1997. Sister Therese had a special gift with young people, and in her retirement years she continued to have contact with students.



Sister Loretto Alphonse Clark, SC

Entered: 1946 + Date of Death: 3/31/15 + Age: 89

Sister Alphonse's first mission was as a group mother at Saint Agatha Home in Nanuet, but most of her years of active ministry were spent in education. She taught elementary school for fifteen years. She later became the Chairperson of the Science Department at St. Gabriel High School. In 1985, Sister Loretto Alphonse went to the College of Mount Saint Vincent, first as Assistant and then as Registrar.



Sister Damian Marie McKeever, SC

Entered: 1946 + Date of Death: 3/1/15 + Age: 86

Sister Damian spent most of her active ministry in elementary education where she filled various roles. Throughout all of her years in ministry and community life, Sister Damian was known for her kindness, her patience, and her deep concern for the people she served.



Sister Patrick Regina Sullivan, SC

Entered: 1942 + Date of Death: 4/24/15 + Age: 90

Sister Patrick Regina was an educator par excellence. She believed in working her students to their full potential and would never let them give up on themselves. Her students loved her for all she did for them, and many continued to keep in touch over the years. Sister was kind, compassionate, and a good listener; she had a wonderful sense of humor which was evident to her students, their parents, her co-workers, and all of the sisters with whom she lived.



Sister Kathleen Hanrahan, SC (*Sister Miriam Francis*)

Entered: 1938 + Date of Death: 3/22/15 + Age: 94

During her more than sixty years of active ministry, Sister Kathleen fulfilled a wide variety of roles, bringing her many talents to each. She began her ministry in the field of education, she held various positions in congregation ministry, as well as in Sisters of Charity hospitals. No matter where she went she brought warmth, compassion, and kindness to those whom she served.



Sister Helen Regina Jarczynski, SC (*Sister Maria Francis*)

Entered: 1940 + Date of Death: 4/29/15 + Age: 93

Sister Helen's early ministry was in elementary education. She was missioned to the Bahamas in 1947 where she served as Headmistress of Sacred Heart and Saint Francis Xavier Schools until 1961. She then served at St. Agatha Home in Nanuet, followed by Saint Augustine School in the Bronx. From 1970 until 1990, Sister Helen served as the Math Lab Coordinator in Emerson Junior High in Yonkers. Sister Helen was a guiding spirit for her students and continued her relationships with them for many years.



Sister Patricia Sullivan, SC (*Sister Regina Timothy*)

Entered: 1958 + Date of Death: 3/22/15 + Age: 74

Sister Patricia was an excellent elementary school teacher. In 1990, Sister became a reading specialist at Cardinal Hayes High School where she developed a reputation as "a great teacher for boys." She later became a guidance counselor, developing personal relationships with her students and their families. Sister Pat continued to help her former students as they journeyed through higher education and life's varied paths.



Sister Mary Ellis, SC (*Sister Aloysia Maria*)

Entered: 1937 + Date of Death: 3/26/15 + Age: 96

Most of Sister Mary's active ministry was in the field of elementary education. She later was the librarian for nine years at Elizabeth Seton Academy in Yonkers. Sister Mary also served in various positions at Saint Patrick Villa, Nanuet, and Saint Vincent Hospital in Harrison throughout her years of ministry.



My Story—St. Elizabeth Ann Seton *Continued from page 3*

comforted. We shared our lives in community, bearing one another's burdens and encouraging one another in our common vocation.

Though I knew nothing about being a religious, much less organizing a community, I placed my gifts in God's hands and trusted that the Spirit would lead me. I prayed for openness to meet my grace in each moment, and taught my Sisters to do the same.

Today, from heaven, I rejoice to see my Sisters living lives of love in New York and Guatemala, walking the way of Charity as vowed religious, women of mission, women of the church. We need a new generation of women on fire with God's love. If you hear God inviting you, I urge you to risk the journey. *Hazard yet forward!*

New Book Celebrates Seton Connection

Regina Bechtle, SC

Congratulations to SCNY Associate Anne Merwin, the newest on our Congregation's roster of published authors. Her biography, *Elizabeth Ann Seton* (Pauline Books & Media, paperback) is a welcome addition to the literature about our American saint.

Anne is a former president of the Mother Seton House on Paca Street in Baltimore, where Elizabeth and her children lived from June 1808 to June 1809, after they left New York. Anne's life mirrors Elizabeth's in many ways; she too was a debutante, wife, mother, Episcopalian, and a convert to Catholicism. She is also related to Mary Hoffman Seton, one of Elizabeth's sisters-in-law. These connections give Anne an inside track into Mother Seton's heart and spirit.

"Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton accepted the fullness of God's grace," writes Anne. "Blessings became joys, and challenges strengthened her soul with humility and

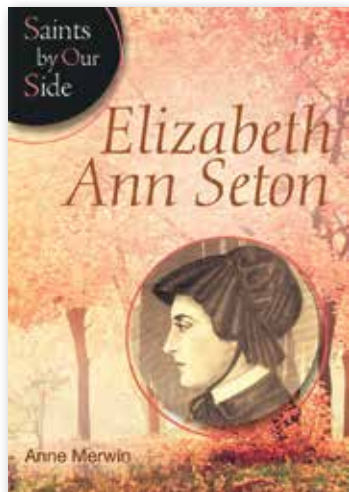
perseverance." This short (144 pages) but meaty book unfolds the story of those joys and challenges, from New York to Livorno, Baltimore to Emmitsburg to Eternity, in a thoughtful, engaging way.

The author, a careful researcher, includes helpful historical context to prove her point that Elizabeth was led to be "in the right place at the right time," and that her story, though "fully American," had a global dimension that fits the woman who called herself a "citizen of the world."

For those just getting acquainted with Mother Seton, the book presents her simply, readably, and gracefully, deftly underscoring the Providence that marked her life at every turn.

For those who know the story well, the book offers many fresh insights and connections. For example, Anne speaks of the life-changing risk that Elizabeth took when she left her socioeconomic class to become a Catholic, yet on the flip side, notes that her conversion also left her "free to pursue a new life."

Anne captures spirituality in its fully human dimensions: "She [Mother Seton] responded to the needs of each day and to the events of her time. She



Author Anne Merwin, right, with Sr. Margaret Ellen Burke at Associate Day 2014

answered the call of Christ with a grateful and willing heart. She accepted God's will and moved forward." The book's closing chapter, "Divine Education," demonstrates that the author has mulled over and prayed with Elizabeth's words for many years. Anne sums up the core of Elizabeth's holiness as extraordinary faith, hope, and charity lived in everyday ways—an especially relevant theme in this 40th anniversary year of the saint's canonization.

The book's footnotes are useful but not intrusive. A chronology, lists of sources and Seton pilgrimage sites, and reflection questions, make the book ideal for a prayer or discussion group.

Editor's note: Anne's book may be purchased directly from Pauline Books. Visit our website for more information: <http://www.scny.org/new-book-celebrates-seton-connection/>

SAVE THE DATES Sisters of Charity Events

In Support of Our Ministries to Those Living in Poverty

Call 718-879-5262



Second Annual Fall Luncheon
Xaviars X20 on the Hudson
Yonkers Waterfront
Wednesday, September 16, 2015



Annual Golf Outing
Saint Andrew's Golf Club
Hastings-on-Hudson
Thursday, October 1, 2015

YEAR OF CONSECRATED LIFE

Save the Date

Sunday, September 27, 2015
the Sisters of Charity invite you to
tour Mount Saint Vincent
on the Feast of St. Vincent de Paul

Tours include (1-2:30):

Lourdes Grotto

Sisters of Charity Archives

Sisters Cemetery

followed by

Prayer Service at Chapel
of the Immaculate Conception
Refreshments at Mount Saint
Vincent Convent

Watch our website for more info

Together on the Journey

In the summer of 2014, Hebert Ariel was facing deportation and the possibility of injury and retaliation from gang members in his native country of Nicaragua. Hebert was in great need of legal assistance to seek asylum and prevent deportation. Through the intervention of Associates Frank and Pat Devaney, the Sisters of Charity made a donation of \$1,000 towards Hebert's legal fees. After reviewing his case, Gregory Pietrzak, Esq. and his law firm, Macina & Pietrzak, LLC, agreed to represent Hebert. An asylum application was soon filed and a preliminary hearing was set for January 8, 2015.

Pat and Frank accompanied Hebert and his attorney to 26 Federal Plaza in New York City for the hearing. A judge reviewed his documents and set a date in May, 2017 for scrutiny of the case, including original documentation from Nicaragua. Hebert's attorney was also



Gregory Pietrzak, Esq., (left) and Hebert

able to file an application for employment authorization based on the pending asylum application. He can remain in the United States for the next two years, continue his biweekly English classes, and gather his papers to solidify his claim for asylum.

Frank Devaney, retired from the New York City Board of Education, taught

English as a Second Language classes for fifty years. He now volunteers his time teaching ESL classes at Our Lady of Good Counsel in Inwood, NY. It was there that Frank met the bright young man who is working hard to master his new language and dreams about a brighter future. Hebert wishes to begin GED classes and eventually attend York College.

It would appear that on that day in January, Hebert's life took on a brighter outlook as he continues his quest for permanent protection and stability in his life in the United States. The change in Hebert's life, however, did not happen in just that one day. The change was achieved by the collaboration of his attentive teacher, Frank; his skilled and compassionate lawyer, Mr. Pietrzak; a caring activist, Pat; and the Sisters of Charity. With his work ethic, determination, and friends like Pat and Frank, Associates who live the charism of charity, Hebert is on his way to achieving the American dream.



LifeWay
NETWORK

LifeWay Network held its annual fundraising event on May 19 at Wallace Hall, St. Ignatius Loyola Church in Manhattan. Eleven Sisters of Charity of New York were present to help support the event,

as were other members of CRC-STOP, a coalition of thirty-eight religious congregations of women and men in the New York Metro area searching for ways to combat human trafficking through educating the public, working for legislation to prevent human trafficking, and providing safe houses for victims.

Sister Joan Dawber, SC-Halifax, Executive Director of LifeWay Network, announced that a second safe house and a joint project with Covenant House are expected to open before the end of 2015, bringing the number of beds for survivors of abuse to twenty-five, the largest number of any one organization in New York.

LifeWay Network is one of only two organizations in the metro area providing safe housing for women survivors of trafficking. LifeWay's Safe Housing Program goes beyond offering shelter by welcoming each woman into a supportive, caring environment that helps her recover from her trauma, regain her sense of self-worth, and enables her to move from isolation towards reclaiming her independence.

Sister Mary Ellen O'Boyle represents SCNY in this ministry and in CRC-STOP. In addition, several Sisters serve as volunteers at the safe house. Those interested in volunteering may contact Sr. Patricia Brennan, Volunteer Coordinator, at 718-549-9200.

Karen Helfenstein, SC

Retired Sisters Carry the Mission

Continued from page 5



Sisters from Kittay House and Elizabeth's Place before Mass

During the Fridays in Lent Sr. Sheila Brosnan visited Kittay and led a reflection on the Sunday Liturgy readings. As a result, a group of those Sisters have formed their own reflection groups and will take turns preparing the prayers and the reflections. Sister Margaret Ellen Burke will soon be leading the Sisters in a retreat.

It is obvious to anyone who visits them that the lives of these Sisters are still rooted in our mission of witness and prayer. While their caring footprints throughout the years have become embedded in many, many lives, this new kind of everyday living is, they seem to say, simply another way for them to live among God's people, to serve them, and to learn from them in Humility, Simplicity, and Charity.

Sister Story

The Sisters of Charity website has changed over the years. In the early days of www.scny.org, the site was a vehicle to provide history and information about the Congregation. Today the site also provides an opportunity for visitors to engage with us and share their own stories. Much to our delight, many people do. Some of these stories touch our hearts so, that we would like to share them with you. We hope you enjoy them as much as we do.

The story I wish to share is not how just one sister has touched my life, but rather how the Sisters of Charity as a whole have shaped my family and my career. I am a registered nurse and recently began working at the Elizabeth Seton Pediatric

Center. I had struggled with the decision to work at the Pediatric Center for various reasons, but on my very first day realized it was exactly where I was meant to be.

On my first day of orientation at ESPC, one of the sisters came to speak to us about the Sisters of Charity and the history of Saint Elizabeth Seton. She explained some details, including the fact that the sisters were responsible for starting the New York Foundling. I felt as though time stopped for just a moment as I put this history together with my own personal story. My grandmother, who was a treasured part of my life, was herself a foundling. She could remember immigrating to the United States with her parents as a very young child, and that she was given up to the Foundling. Through the Foundling and the Sisters of Charity she was kept alive and well, and eventually adopted by a loving family. The New York Foundling saved her life and found her a home where she could thrive after the trauma of losing her biological family, and she went on to marry and have children of her own. Because of the work of the



Nurse Melissa Minutaglio visited the Sisters of Charity Center in May and posed by the painting that represents the Congregation's first mission.

Foundling and the Sisters of Charity in helping abandoned children, I am alive today, two generations later.

Even more amazing is that there I sat in orientation, realizing how much I owe to the Sisters of Charity, about whom I knew so little. It is so special to me that I am now working in one of their sponsored ministries. It has always been my personal goal to live a life of service, but it means so much that I can now serve the children and families in conjunction with the sisters to whom I owe so much.

I am so grateful for what they have done for my family, for all the families they have touched with their work, and for the fact that I now get to be a part of what they do in a small way. What more can I do than express my heartfelt gratitude to the sisters who allowed my family to survive and grow, have given me a place to work, and have given so much meaning to the work I do caring for the children at ESPC? Because of your work I am now able in turn to be of service, and that is a truly great gift. Thank you for all that you do.

Melissa Minutaglio, RN

Sister Lorraine [Cooper] gave me the confidence I needed growing up in a home where reading really wasn't very important. She helped me organize the first school newspaper at St. Augustine's in the Bronx and I wrote the first article, which was a review of the brand new television program, *The Waltons* ☺. She wrote a Christmas skit for our class to perform and assigned the parts in accordance to people's character—and I was Santa Claus. We had an art class and learned to work with clay. While other kids were creating cars and houses, I had to go all out and create a replica of the Bernini Altar in the Vatican—LOL! I gave it to her and she loved it. Sister Lorraine was the best.

Jose Velez-Badillo
Bronx, NY

Just wanted you all to know that today being the Feast of Mother Seton, I remembered with great fondness the Sisters of Charity who taught me at Epiphany school in Manhattan. I have great love for them and I attribute my religious vocation to the Sisters. Please send special regards to my 4th and 7th grade teacher, Sr. Joseph Loretta, (Sr. Elizabeth Butler). It was her love of education and her special way of caring for her students that led me to pursue religious life. I will always praise the Sisters of Charity. I had great love as well for my principal, Sister Mary Agnita.

Today the church celebrates the Feast of the Epiphany. It was a home run for me at Mass this morning: the Mass was said for my parents' memory, it is the Feast of the Epiphany (my home parish), and the Feast of Mother Seton. It does not get better than this.

On Tuesday, January 6th, we will have an all-school Mass in honor of the Epiphany and Mother Seton. My high school students here know lots about the great work of Mother Seton and the Sisters of Charity.

Love to all of you (I will always be a "Sisters of Charity Boy")

Brother David, Principal
Notre Dame Regional HS, Missouri

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