

VISION

THE SISTERS OF CHARITY OF NEW YORK

Living Lives of Love

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SISTERS
of CHARITY
NEW YORK

The Year of Mercy



Letter from Leadership

Dear Friends,

When this year of grace, 2016, was declared a **Year of Mercy**, I was intrigued by what may have prompted Pope Francis to focus on mercy. Why now, why mercy? What might this attentiveness to mercy as an attribute of God and a gift of grace mean to us personally and to our world, at this moment in history?

In the Hebrew language, the meaning of the words mercy and merciful is embedded in the expressions for compassion and compassionate. Hence in the English translation, mercy and merciful and compassion and compassionate are strongly linked. The judge or jury weighing a plea for mercy, or a pedestrian conflicted about the deleterious effects of giving without attending to the greater needs of a begging person, are prime examples of how we need to be immersed deeply in the grace of mercy.

At times, the image of marketplace scales has proven to be helpful in decision making. In this model, mercy could be weighed against justice, or justice weighed against kindness, or any combination of good values stacked up in juxtaposition to one another. Pope Francis seems to be calling people to reawaken a sense of mercy that transcends calculations and leads to God, who opens new terrains of wisdom, joy, forgiveness, hospitality, and peace.

In this Year of Mercy, I have come to pay closer attention to the triple plea for mercy that we extend as a community each time we celebrate liturgy; "Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy. I acknowledge that in the past I have prayed that petition without dwelling on the significance of the request. Shakespeare, in the *Merchant of Venice*, expresses the implications of a prayer for mercy. "... in the course of justice, none of us should see salvation: we do pray for mercy; and that same prayer doth teach us all to render the deeds of mercy."

On a bitter cold day, a few weeks ago, I got on a city bus without having my Metro Card in hand. As I fumbled with purse and bundles, the driver stated "no pass, 10 quarters in change." I replied "please let me off." The driver gestured me to sit; as I did, a man in a wheelchair that was laden with his possessions reached out and offered me his card to use.

Mercy is a mighty energy that picks up momentum as we begin to notice it in our midst. Together, let us envision mercy anew.

Peace,

Sheila Brosnan A.C.

Sheila Brosnan, SC
Leadership Team Member



Do You Share Your VISION?

When you finish reading your copy of VISION, we'd appreciate it if you would consider passing it along and help us spread the word about our work and history. Drop it off in your church vestibule, your local Catholic school, doctor's office or other waiting room, laundromat, community or senior center, or any other place you see a stack of magazines. You never know who might pick it up—perhaps a former student, friend, or colleague. Thank you!

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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Looking back on my life in ministry at the close of the Year of Consecrated Life

Above left: As a novice with my sponsor, Sr. Grace Anne Troisi; **right:** receiving my candle from Sr. Dominica Rocchio during the Transfer of Leadership ceremony in 2015

God's love is everlasting. Those words, like a melody, have underscored all the words of my life. During my 50 years of being a Sister of Charity of New York, God's love has lit up my life in so many ways.

As a very young sister, while teaching junior high English at St. Margaret of Cortona in the Bronx, I had the opportunity of serving one evening a week as a chaplain in the Women's House of Detention on Rikers Island. There I met women who needed to be reassured of the merciful love of God and in each reassurance I was able to give, I met again the face of God.

After studying for my Masters of Divinity, I moved one parish south, to Visitation. Working with the youth, with Adult Faith Formation, and with the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine program (CCD) filled my days with wonderful people. The most profound experiences there came during the door-to-door, apartment-to-apartment evangelization program which took place two evenings a week. Each door that opened contained another image of God and a story of life. The aged couple, the single mother, the struggling family, all demonstrated the God whose love is present in the messy middle of life, not just in glorious beginnings and happy endings.

Widening the scope of my service, from a parish to the whole of the Bronx as Regional Director of Catechesis for the Archdiocese of New York, enabled me to find the goodness and perseverance of people who had come as immigrants from many parts of the world and relied on their faith to keep them grounded. I saw the everlasting love of God in each and every catechist. During this time I began my ministry in Religious Formation as well. Women and men seeking to discern God's will met one weekend a month to learn about religious life. The directors who accompanied them deepened their own commitments and formed friendships with the courageous men and women who were willing to walk with others into an unknown future. God's fidelity lights my life today in the close friendships that remain from those days.

Full-time ministry in the Collaborative Novitiate, which brought together the novitiate programs of the Sisters of Charity of New York, Halifax, and Convent Station, New Jersey, renewed for me the variety of ways that God's love endured in various congregations. The similarities and differences among the congregations awakened in me a real appreciation for diversity of expression in the midst of unity of charism. Those realizations were deepened years later when in my work with the Sisters of Charity Federation I was privileged to learn and appreciate each unique story and example of the enduring love of God.

My time in inner-city Newark and at Terrance Cardinal Cooke Healthcare Center put me in daily touch with those on the margins. Extreme poverty, HIV-AIDS, debilitating disease, the pain caused by racism, and drug abuse became the places in which I met the love of God. The strength and goodness of so many of the suffering touched my heart and opened my eyes. The devotion and generosity of staff and volunteers inspired me.

During my time as a member of the leadership team of the Sisters of Charity I have seen first-hand the resiliency, creativity, and dedication of our sisters. The concern that sisters have for those living in poverty and for each other has gladdened my heart. The wonderful opportunity I have had to get to know our missions in Guatemala has truly been a blessing of God's everlasting love. With each trip, my eyes have opened wider to God's sustaining and enduring presence in a culture so different from the United States.

Over these grace-filled years I have made mistakes, been less than what I was called to be, and missed opportunities to serve, but I have been surrounded by the everlasting love of God, which I have found in every ministry and mission I have been in. It is God's love that has opened my eyes and heart and which I celebrate in this Jubilee year.

Mary Ann Daly, SC

Mercy: The Heartbeat of the Gospel

by Eileen Fagan, SC

When Pope Francis announced his intention to proclaim a “Year of Mercy” (December 8, 2015–November 20, 2016), he did it at a communal reconciliation service on March 13, 2015. Using the Gospel of Luke 7:36 – 50 for reflection, Pope Francis illustrates the story of the sinful woman who came to the home of Simon the Pharisee to kneel at the feet of Jesus and seek forgiveness with her gesture of washing and anointing. It is the sinful woman, noted Pope Francis, and not Simon, the master of the house, who has truly encountered the Lord and the mercy of God, a mercy that goes beyond justice. Simon’s judgment of the woman prevented him from truly understanding the presence of Jesus. He could not get beyond the surface of things and see that God can touch the human heart. The door to God’s mercy is always open. Hence, Pope Francis’ symbolic gesture of opening the doors of the Church on December 8, the feast of the Immaculate Conception, was to show that no one is excluded from the mercy of God.

Pope Francis stated that he wants this year to be a time for all Catholics to contemplate just how merciful God has been to them and to understand better how they are called to be merciful to others in turn. He wants the year of mercy to usher in a “revolution of tenderness.” A little mercy among human beings can change the world. With the theme of mercy as the key theme of his pontificate, Pope Francis has touched the hearts of countless people both inside and outside the Church. For who among us would not rely on a merciful God and merciful human beings?

Mercy, the Pope writes, is the beating heart of the gospel, which is God’s love showing itself in the life and mission of Jesus. Therefore, as Christians, we are called to resemble Jesus not only in name but in our structure of life. As Jon Sobrino reminds us, “the structure of Jesus’ life is a structure of incarnation, of becoming real flesh in real history” (*The Principle of Mercy*, 15). Jesus’ teachings, table fellowships, and his other social gatherings with the outcasts, the poor, the marginalized,



Vatican City - December 8, 2015. Pope Francis opens the Holy Doors at St. Peter's Basilica to begin the Jubilee Year of Mercy on December 8, 2015, the feast of the Immaculate Conception.

and the sick all showed forth the loving embrace of a merciful God. Everything in him spoke of mercy.

If mercy so structured Jesus’ life, then mercy ought to be the most structuring element of the life of the Church. When mercy is at the heart and soul of the Church, it places the Church outside itself and in a very precise locus—the place where human suffering occurs, especially when that suffering is massive, cruel, and unjust. Moral theologian James Keenan put it well when he said “mercy is the willingness to enter into the chaos of another” (*The Works of Mercy*, 10). Certainly, we have seen much suffering and chaos during these past few years: war and its devastating effects on land and people, terrorism and mass shootings that have destroyed families and societies, economic and political injustices that have caused massive poverty and homelessness, climate change and its effect on our planet, massive migration from abusive countries that have caused many deaths, unjust immigration laws that have put families in danger of separation, human trafficking and the millions of people enslaved in its criminal industry, abuse of women and children, ineffective criminal justice systems, and

religious intolerance that shows forth in actions of extremism.

As we begin a new year, we must make our world one of all good, even though we know from our experience that tragedy and evil will enter into what God created. But, as people of hope, we know that God's power, with our cooperation, will triumph over the destructions and evils of our time. During this year of mercy and a presidential election, how will we as disciples of Jesus, as Sisters, Associates, Companions, and Families of Charity, show forth the mercy of God in our suffering world? In other words, how can we as ecclesial men and women in solidarity with the poor and marginalized create a culture of mercy, a culture of encounter, as Pope Francis has advocated, where our words and actions are inclusive and respectful of every human being's dignity? (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 53; *The Church of Mercy*, 100–101).

Sobrino tells us that we create a culture of mercy and encounter when we put ourselves into the parable of the Good Samaritan and take our place alongside the wounded one in the ditch (*The Principle of Mercy*, 20–21). When one goes out of himself/herself and into the messiness and chaos of another human being, one finds there, in that encounter with a suffering human being, the God of Jesus Christ. It is in that encounter with suffering that one begins to awake from the sleep of inhumanity to the scandalous reality of what is fundamental: a world of suffering people, a crucified people as Sobrino calls it (*The Principle of Mercy*, 4). Unless we see with open eyes and feel with a loving heart what is happening in our world to massive groups of people, we will stand apart from them and retreat into our own comfort zone and allow the injustices which turn our societies into cultures of exclusion and outcasts to prevail.

In the midst of so much injustice, the Christian must raise the question: What has happened to our relationship as brothers and sisters in the family of the one God, who gifted each one with

dignity and honor? Cardinal Walter Kasper reminds us that where a culture of mercy reigns, a wellspring of justice exists because right relationships are in place (*Mercy*, 196–197). It is right relationships that form the fundamental condition for communal life and for the coexistence of peoples. Does not the Trinity, the symbol of the living God, show us all the qualities necessary for a right relationship: trust, communal love, interrelationship, diversity in unity, uniqueness, dignity, equality, freedom, solidarity? Our relationships are impaired by injustice because we have failed to recognize our common humanity and the needs of all creation. Nothing should be indifferent to us. All creation matters in the eyes of God and should matter in our eyes as well. Relationships are what hold families, societies, and countries together as one people under God.

In our Assembly of 2015, the Sisters, Associates, and Companions of Charity stated in the "Call to Mission" that they embrace a process of transformation, stand with the poor and marginalized, witness by our care for all of God's creation, collaborate with others for systemic change, and speak and act for justice in our suffering world. This call was not something that was different from earlier years, but it was a call on a deeper level because the historical situations in our world in 2015 were at a more intense level of injustice. However, we understand as Sisters, Associates, and Companions that our call to mission will not be effective unless each one of us is transformed in the ways of Christian discipleship. Then will our hearts be set on fire to carry a message of mercy and love to a suffering world. "As God by his mercy always gives us a new chance, a new future," states Cardinal Kasper, "our mercy gives future to the other, and to a world that needs it so much" (*America*, September 15, 2014, 18). We stand as the Charity family in this moment of history and journey as a people of mercy.

Sr. Eileen Fagan is an Assistant Professor of Theology at the College of Mount Saint Vincent.

What Does "MERCY" Mean to You?

Sisters, Associates, and staff members were asked the above question. Here's what they said:

To me, mercy means compassion with myself first so that I can offer compassion to others. Jesus is the face of God's mercy turned towards us so that is why I need to be compassionate with myself first.

Dominica Rocchio, SC

Compassion. Forgiveness. Reconciliation. When you put charity and mercy together—wow!

Jane Iannucelli, SC

(Psalm 51: 3) "When we call on God to have mercy, we are calling on God in the only way we know Him ..."

... as one who responds with compassion to those in need. During this Jubilee Year of Mercy, may we, through our prayers and actions, be God's healing presence in our world.

Meg Sweeney, OP

A reminder to step back into the love and forgiveness with which God has graced me, and to pray that I may always try to do the same for myself and others.

Kathleen Gilbride, SC

Mercy—the continuous love of God!

Peggy Cekoric, SC Associate

Mercy is opening up to, reaching out for, and, acting in love, hope and reconciliation. It is God's gift to me and lies deep within, even when I do not feel it.

Carol De Angelo, SC

Let us know what "Mercy" means to you. Email us at extcomm@scny.org or drop us a line. We'd love to know!





Left: Msgr. John Graham prepares for the blessing with the monstrance from the Convent of Mary the Queen. **Right:** (from left) Fr. Elvin Rivera, Sr. Mary Ann D'Antonio, Angelina Hodgson '19, Fr. Joseph Darbouze, and Fr. Raphael Boansi

A Gift of Presence

by Eileen McGrory, SC

When the Convent of Mary the Queen, the skilled nursing facility for the Sisters of Charity, closed at the end of May in 2015, Msgr. John Graham, pastor of St. Raymond's Parish in the Bronx, requested that the monstrance from Mary the Queen be given to St. Raymond's as a sign of the deep,



Sister Mary Ann D'Antonio, Principal of St. Raymond Academy for Girls, was the lector at Mass.

147-year-long relationship between St. Raymond's and the Sisters of Charity of New York. We were very happy to fulfill his request. Before the monstrance was brought to the parish, an engraving was made on the bottom of it, reading "Gift of the Sisters of Charity of New York to Saint Raymond Church from Convent of Mary the Queen." In appreciation for the gift, Msgr. Graham invited sisters in the Congregation who taught in any of the three St. Raymond's schools, or lived in the convent at any time, or grew up in the parish, to a special event on Saturday, November 21, 2015. Twenty-two sisters out of thirty-four were able to accept the invitation.

The afternoon began at 12:00 noon with a Mass of Thanksgiving in the church. Monsignor Graham was the principal celebrant and the priests of the parish concelebrated. Mass concluded

with the celebration of Benediction in which the monstrance from Mary the Queen was used.

Music during the Mass was provided by choir members from both the Girls Academy and the Boys High School, accompanied by Steven Gates on piano and directed by Gregory Lathan. After Mass we moved next door to the Café of St. Raymond's Academy for Girls, where a delicious three-course dinner was served. The menu had been carefully planned by Sr. Mary Ann D'Antonio, SC, Principal of the Academy, and Msgr. Graham. During the meal the St. Raymond's Show Choir entertained with a cappella singing under the able direction of Gregory Lathan. Around the tables stories were shared of life experiences in St. Raymond's Parish. As the day came to an end, all agreed it was an event to remember.

Continued, see page 12, bottom

Below left: Sisters applauded the performance of the choir. **Right:** St. Raymond's Academy for Girls and the High School for Boys Chior





Left: Deborah Croce (standing) and Michelle Harris; **center:** Student Ranbir Shergill; **right:** (behind counter) Michelle Harris and Chef Mark Arnao; (in front) Brian Reilly (left) and Earnest Smith.

Planting Seeds and Reaping Hope

The parable of the mustard seed is witnessed time and time again throughout the missions of the Sisters of Charity. Sometimes that mustard seed grows where it is least expected. And sometimes it's not about where it grows, but through whom it grows.

In the Spring 2013 issue of *Vision*, we featured a story titled *Puttin' on the Ritz*. It tells how, as part of its Community Footprints program, the five-star Ritz-Carlton Hotel Central Park entered into a collaborative endeavor with Sisters Hill Farm in May 2012. The driving force of this program is Deborah Croce, Director of Human resources at the hotel. Since that time, various staff members travel from Manhattan to the farm several times a year to help plant, weed, and harvest fruits and vegetables alongside Farmer Dave Hambleton and his apprentices and volunteers. In addition, the hotel purchases ten shares of the produce every year for its farm-to-table offerings at its restaurant.

The hotel's collaboration with the farm is a project which most executives could step back from and be proud of accomplishing. But not Deborah Croce. Ms. Croce saw an opportunity to make a greater impact with the hotel's program and she immediately made things happen.

As part of its Community Footprints program, the Ritz-Carlton staff is also involved with the Queens Satellite High School for Opportunity (QSHSO), an alternative school that serves over-aged, under-credited students who were unsuccessful in their previous schools for various reasons. The students receive an inquiry-based personalized education and upon graduation are equipped with the skills necessary for success in college and the workplace. It was clear to Ms. Croce that the high school's mission and the Ritz-Carlton's Community Footprints program were a perfect match.

In their visits to the Ritz-Carlton, the students are able to gain an understanding of the behind-the-scenes operations of a major luxury hotel.

During one of Ms. Croce's visits to the school in 2014, she heard someone reading aloud from a book about agriculture and a thought struck her: bring the students to the Farm.

It didn't take long for Ms. Croce to contact Sr. Mary Ann Garisto, Director of Sisters Hill Farm, about her idea and then arrange for the hotel to provide the needed transportation. In no time at all she had several students and staff from the high school on a bus to Sisters Hill Farm—including Principal Mark Melkonian.

The contingent from the school has since traveled to the farm four times to help with as many tasks as possible. Of the collaboration with the Ritz-Carlton Hotel, Farmer Dave says, "I'm eternally grateful for the relationship that has developed between the Ritz-Carlton, Sisters Hill Farm, and the Queens High School for Opportunity. Deborah Croce has organized a handful of volunteer work days on the farm for several years now. She also heads up a book club with teenagers at the high school. She's been the driving force in our wonderful

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Right: The students and Ritz-Carlton staff joined the POTS staff to prepare and serve lunch.



Exhibit Highlights Two Bicentennials

Regina Bechtle, SC
& Anne Marie Gardiner



A recently opened exhibit at St. Patrick's Old Cathedral highlights the ongoing influence of the Sisters of Charity on the Church of New York. Ten panels attractively incorporate historical material that was prepared in 2012 by the Congregation for a book presented to New York's newly installed Timothy Cardinal Dolan. The book outlines the histories of the bishops and archbishops of the Archdiocese and the leaders of the Sisters of Charity, spotlighting the ministries opened by the Sisters in each era.

With the help of Turlough McConnell Communications, the exhibit, entitled *How the Nuns of New York Tamed the Gangs of New York*, was brought to life with a theatrical performance at the Sheen Center for Thought and Culture on Bleeker Street on November 22, 2015. An audience of over 200 friends and benefactors of the Sisters of Charity saw seven focal points of the 200 years of their history in New York performed through readings, song, music, and dance. The exhibit panels will be on display at St. Patrick's Old Cathedral through the spring.

The highlight of the afternoon was a presentation to Sr. Jane Iannucelli, President, of a sculpture by renowned Irish artist Rowan Gillespie entitled *The Orphan*, which symbolized the Sisters' ministry to the poor and orphaned immigrants upon their arrival in New York. Mr. Gillespie was also commissioned by Monsignor Donald Sakano, pastor of St. Patrick's Old Cathedral, to make a statue of Archbishop John J. Hughes to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the Cathedral's founding.

St. Patrick's Old Cathedral was dedicated in 1815 and the Sisters of Charity began their mission in New York in the Cathedral parish in 1817. Two hundred years later, we recognize these two events, not as accidental but as providentially connected.

As a 2008 exhibit on New York's Catholics at the Museum of the City of New York stated, "The Sisters of Charity were and are responsible for much of the child care, education, and health care in the Archdiocese of New York." In other words, one really can't tell the story of the Church in New York without mentioning the Sisters of Charity.

Left: Artist Rowan Gillespie presents Sr. Jane with *The Orphan*.





Far left: With the image of the Sisters of Charity marching in the St. Patrick's Day Parade in 2009 projected above, Sr. Jane addressed the audience after the performance of *How the Nuns of New York Tamed the Gangs of New York*. **Left:** Sisters Margaret O'Brien (left) and Sheila Brosnan viewing the panels.

Sisters of Charity in New York: The Story Begins

The diocese was created in 1808, nine years before the Sisters arrived. The first bishop, Richard Luke Concanen, waited two years unsuccessfully for passage across the Atlantic. He died in Naples, a victim of Napoleon's naval embargo.

Archbishop John Carroll of Baltimore appointed Jesuit Anthony Kohlmann as interim administrator of the diocese. He knew Elizabeth Seton, the widowed New Yorker who had become a Catholic in 1805 and moved to Maryland. There, in 1809, she began the first active religious community of women founded in the United States, the Sisters of Charity of St. Joseph's. Father Kohlmann wrote to Mother Seton that September, expressing the hope that she would eventually send some of her Sisters to New York. Eight more years would pass before his hopes were realized.

By May 1815 the New York diocese finally had its cathedral, but not yet its shepherd. It was November when Bishop John Connolly, an Irish Dominican, arrived, with his work cut out for him. Most of the 12,000 Catholics in New York City (about 12 percent of the population) were Irish, German, or French, white or African-American, with uncounted others in the rest of New York State and northern New Jersey. To tend his flock, scattered over 55,000 square miles, Bishop Connolly had only three priests.

Even decades before the Irish famine, desperate immigrants were daily arriving in the port of New York. Many died on the voyage, leaving children to roam the streets or be taken into asylums where their Catholic faith was forgotten. Bishop Connolly saw their plight, and in 1817 asked Mother Seton to send three Sisters to open and staff an orphanage.

Personnel were key to the success of this venture, for New Yorkers then (as now) were known to be demanding. "So much must depend ... on who is sent to my native city," wrote Elizabeth Seton. Archbishop Carroll of Baltimore concurred: "New York is a city of too much consequence not to demand superior abilities." To lead the New York mission Mother Seton chose Sr. Rose White, who three years earlier had taken over an orphanage in Philadelphia and, with the Sisters and lay benefactors, had rescued it from collapse.

After seven days travel from Emmitsburg via Philadelphia, Srs. Rose White, Cecilia O'Conway, and Felicitas (or Felicité) Brady arrived in New York on August 20, 1817. The limits of the fast-growing city then extended from the Battery to 31st Street.

The Sisters found their new home on Prince Street—a rundown frame house that was a makeshift hospital during the Revolution—not yet ready for occupancy. It wasn't the first or the last time that the Sisters had to make do. After several weeks of strenuous cleaning, they opened the doors of the Roman Catholic Orphan Asylum, across the street from the first St. Patrick's Cathedral. Five orphans were admitted during the first three months; by the end of the year there were 28.

Conditions for the poor in New York were dire. Severe winters, the economic slump after the War of 1812, a huge in-pouring of immigrants, and almost yearly yellow fever epidemics created an ongoing state of crisis. About the orphanage, Sr. Rose White, the Sister Servant (Superior) wrote, "The beginning very poor, yet the people very kind." The Sisters supplemented the meager \$36 allotted annually for each of them with funds raised by the RCOA's Ladies' Society, who solicited donations from Protestant as well as Catholic women of the city.

More Sisters were sent to staff St. Patrick's Free School, which opened in 1822. It was the beginning of the educational ministry of the Sisters of Charity that would shape the lives of thousands of New York students over the next two centuries.

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Right: SCNY historical panels were displayed in the courtyard of St. Patrick's Old Cathedral.



Student Ernest Smith enjoyed volunteering at POTS.

Seeds, Hope...

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association since day one. The spirit of hospitality they cultivate at the hotel carries over to their days with us. They are our guests who come to work with us and they even bring us lunch! Executive Chef Mark Arnao is another member of the Ritz staff whom I cannot praise enough. He and Debbie show up rain or shine. He has done everything from slaving over a hot grill at our picnics, to digging root crops out of the frozen ground in the late fall.”

“We all benefit from getting out of our own heads for a day and sharing our experience and perspectives. The hotel staff gets a glimpse of our world, working outside in beautiful fields, using their bodies and minds in a productive way all day. The sense of accomplishment on these days is palpable—with many hands joining together on tasks that might otherwise seem daunting. Every spring they help us spread about 40 cubic yards of compost and plant over a thousand pounds of potatoes. Later in the fall they come back to help us harvest some of them.”

If this story ended here, it would already be considered pretty special, but it doesn’t. Knowing that Sisters Hill Farm donates ten percent of its harvest to its neighbors in need—including soup kitchens and pantries—Ms. Croce began thinking aloud around the farm lunchtime table. She wondered

if it was possible for the students to experience their efforts come full circle by having them participate in donating the produce to a soup kitchen. Sister Mary Ann, who is always looking for ways to collaborate with other ministries, immediately thought of POTS.

Part of the Solution (POTS), another sponsored ministry of the Sisters of Charity, is a multi-service center serving the needs of the community in the Fordham section of the Bronx. Among POTS’ many services is a community dining room, which serves hot meals to all who enter its doors. Sister Mary Ann soon reached out to POTS and set the plan in motion.

On November 9, 2015, Sr. Mary Ann met Ms. Croce, Ritz-Carlton Executive Chef Mark Arnao, QSHSO staff member Brian Reilly, students Michelle Harris, Ranbir Shergill, and Ernest Smith at POTS. Joining the POTS kitchen staff, Chef Mark made “smashed potatoes” with the potatoes the students had helped plant and harvest. He and Michelle spent the entire meal time serving plate after plate of smashed potatoes, meatless chili, and salad. Sister Mary Ann, Ms. Croce, Ranbir, and Ernest served beverages, delivered plates to the clients, and helped clean up afterwards. It was quite clear that they all felt committed to the project.

It was a long and tiring day but the students enjoyed volunteering at POTS and were proud of the work they had accomplished. Student Ernest Smith said, “The farm was a great experience. While there I was able to get a better understanding of what teamwork is. The Ritz-Carlton was also a great experience because we were shown how a hotel is run behind the scenes and at the end we were able to serve the wonderful food that we planted and picked. I will definitely volunteer again.” Not wanting to miss out on the experience, Michelle Harris, who graduated in January 2015, returned to volunteer at POTS that day.

On that day in November, all the pieces came together to serve those in need and build a sense of service and gratitude and it would not have been possible without Deborah Croce. Reflecting on the the students’ experiences, she said, “Making a difference in the community is what I like to do.” A seed was planted, the mission of the Sisters of Charity lives on.



Sister Marion Halpin Celebrates 99th Birthday & 75th Jubilee

“It was all worth it,” says Sr. Marion Halpin (Sr. Marie James) who celebrated her 99th birthday on January 28 and 75 years as a Sister on February 2. Sister Marion began ministerial life as a first grade teacher in 1941 at St. Agnes in Manhattan. She later transitioned to the field of finance and worked in the accounting office of the New York Foundling. She later brought her skills to the Student Aid Program at the College of Mount Saint Vincent. After acquiring a master’s degree in Social Gerontology from Columbia University in 1972, Sr. Marian worked as a Geriatric Social Worker at Catholic Charities in Manhattan. Ministry life took yet another turn when she served in Parish Ministry in Pawling, NY, for sixteen years.

Congratulations and blessings to you, Sr. Marion, for your life of service.



The Academy of Mount Saint Vincent was founded in 1847 and received a NYS Charter as a women's college in 1911. From its foundation, an MSV education attracted students who had a desire to serve. They learned the meaning of charity and service through watching the Sisters of Charity go about living the "charity of Christ" in their daily lives.

First-year students arrive on campus having a sense of the needs of the community and having already done much service in trying to alleviate these needs. They graduate from the Mount knowing how they will be a part of those who will make our city, our world, our universe a better and more equitable place in which to live. They are drawn further into the idea that "the Charity of Christ impels" them as well as the Sisters of Charity.

The Sisters, though fewer in number, are still a powerful presence here at Mount Saint Vincent. They share their charism, their history, and their wisdom with the students and together we share more than just this beautiful campus, we share the love of trying to fulfill every service in our power.

Through out the year, *Campus Corner* will feature the learning through service lived by CMSV students.

Maryellen Blumlein, SC



From left: Sr. Marie Tolle, Hersey Contreras, Catherine Reiss, Kathryn Dalton, Briggette Parra, and Emily Petrillo

CMSV Students Live the Mission of Charity

During a time when most college students are enjoying winter break, five CMSV students visited the Sisters of Charity/Diocese of Spokane missions in Guatemala to share in a life-changing experience they will never forget.

Hosted by Sisters Marie Tolle and Ceil Harriendorf from January 10 through 16, the students—all seniors in the CMSV nursing program—volunteered at the medical clinics in Ixtahuacan, Novillero, and Nahaula where they weighed babies, provided immunizations and vaccinations, registered incoming patients, and assisted the doctor with exams. In speaking of her experience Hersy Contreras said, "It was very humbling and eye-opening. You don't get to choose where to be born, but you can choose to give back and make a difference. I will definitely continue to do mission trips."

The students also had the privilege of distributing hand-made hats to the children. Brought by Catherine Reiss, the hats were donated by an earlier group of volunteer nursing alumna from the College of Mount Saint Vincent.

The students visited the Pacaxom preschool program where the children—always eager to show how much they are learning—sang six songs in Spanish, Quiché, and English.

After five days of hard work, Sr. Ceil, Director of Volunteers in Guatemala, took the students on a road trip to see the beautiful Lake Atitlan in the town of Panajachel.

The journey would not be complete a stop at the Barbara Ford Peace Building Center in Quiche to visit with the sisters there and get a glimpse of the work being accomplished at the Center.

Of the students' experiences, Sr. Ceil added, "Students observe, question, participate, and leave Guatemala with a better sense of the challenges of their chosen profession. We ask God's blessings on their enthusiastic spirits and on the people they have served with simplicity and generosity."



A child at the clinic sports one of the hats distributed by the nursing students.

St. Vincent's Hospital Memorialized in Greenwich Village

Down in Greenwich Village at the intersection of Greenwich Avenue, West 12th Street, and Seventh Avenue, directly across from what had been the entrance to the emergency room of the hospital, is a new triangular park. The property, once owned by Saint Vincent's Hospital, has been designated as a memorial to both the hospital and the victims of the AIDS Crisis of the 1980's. The section memorializing the hospital is complete. The AIDS Memorial, located at the apex of the triangle will be finished in May, 2016.

When visiting the park, look for six dark gray medallions embedded in the lighter gray cement of the walkway. The medallions are located near the entrances to the park. Each medallion commemorates one of the six historical events in which Saint Vincent's Hospital played a unique role.

One medallion pays tribute to the Sisters of Charity of New York who founded the hospital in 1849. The remaining five plaques are dedicated to major events in the history of New York City and Saint Vincent's Hospital's role in each event.



St. Vincent's Hospital/AIDS Memorial photo

- » Cholera Epidemic – 1849
- » Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire – 1911
- » Treatment of Steerage Survivors of the Titanic – 1912
- » Opening of the first and largest AIDS ward on the east coast – 1984
- » Initial triage hospital following the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center – September 11, 2001

Miriam Kevin Phillips, SC

A Gift of Presence

Continued from page 6



Above: Steven Gates on the keyboards (left) and Gregory Lathan, choir director

We thank Msgr. Graham for his thoughtful invitation to the celebration on November 21. We are happy to know that on Friday afternoons our monstrance will be used for Exposition and Benediction. The Eucharistic Presence of our God is a gift that will continue to be shared by the people of St. Raymond's parish and the Sisters of Charity of New York.



Above: Sr. Eileen McGrory speaking at the luncheon. **Below:** (from left) St. Raymond School graduate Sr. Dorothy Metz, Msgr. John Graham, and Sr. Peggy McEntee, who taught Religion at St. Raymond Academy for Girls.



National Shrine of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton Selected as Site for “Door of Mercy”



The Basilica of The National Shrine of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton has been chosen by the Archdiocese of Baltimore as a site for a Door of Mercy, as part of Pope Francis's Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy. The Year of Mercy, which began on December 8 in Rome, encourages people to encounter the mercy and love of God, as well as to be merciful with others.

“We’re so pleased that Archbishop Lori has designated our Basilica as one of the few sites of a Door of Mercy in the Baltimore Archdiocese,” said Rob Judge, Executive Director of The National Shrine of Saint Elizabeth Ann

Seton. “It’s such an extraordinary gesture by Pope Francis to ask every bishop around the world to designate Doors of Mercy. With numerous ones throughout the world, the Pope is demonstrating that God’s mercy is available and accessible to all. It’s a wonderful opportunity for people to experience the love of God, who consoles and instills hope.”

The Seton Shrine’s Door of Mercy opened during Mass on December 13, and will remain open until the Year of Mercy ends in November 2016. “Designating Doors of Mercy throughout the world has never been done before,” said Judge. “We welcome visitors of all faiths to the

Shrine and Basilica, and invite them to experience this rare occurrence and walk through our Door of Mercy.”

The National Shrine of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton is open Tuesday through Sunday, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Guided tours of the Shrine, including the Basilica, historic homes, and the grounds, are available on the hour from 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Tuesday through Friday. The Basilica at the Shrine is open every day from 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. To plan a visit, please call 301-447-6606 or visit www.setonshrine.org

*Scott Dugan, Seton
Heritage Ministries*

Looking Toward the Future with New Monthly Donor Program

Like many other organizations, the Sisters of Charity have very faithful and supporting benefactors who give generously to our mission. One of the ways to encourage financial support is to offer a monthly giving program, which enables participants to include the Congregation in their monthly or yearly budget.

We are happy to announce the newly formed Mother Seton Circle. The Mother Seton Circle is a group of supporters who make regular monthly contributions to further the work of the Congregation. The name comes from the widening circle of compassion created by our founder, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, who was a loving mother not only to



her five children, but also to the many Sisters, supporters, and children she served.

Members enjoy an array of unique benefits, which includes special remembrance at three annual Masses and an invitation to our Sisters’ new online book club!

The Congregation will benefit greatly by your Mother Seton Circle membership because it helps clarify our monthly budget. This helps us to plan wisely for the care of our elderly Sisters and for our ministries that serve people in need.

For more information and to receive a brochure about the Mother Seton Circle, please email amgardiner@scny.org or call the Development Office at 718-549-9200.

With Love and Appreciation We Remember...

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

Sister Agnes Regina Hughes, SC

Entered: 1949 + Date of Death: 11/14/15 + Age: 84

Sister Agnes Regina's early ministry was in elementary education where she taught for a total of twenty-one years. She later served as Religious Education coordinator. In 1985 Sister Agnes began the Clinical Pastoral Care Education Program at Cabrini Hospital, which led to her work as Associate Chaplain and in other pastoral care programs.



Sister Caroline McGinn, SC

Entered: 1950 + Date of Death: 12/15/15 + Age: 83

Sister Caroline's ministry in education encompassed elementary to high school as both teacher and guidance counselor. Her final ministry experience was with the New York City Board of Education where she worked as Guidance Counselor for the public school system. In her retirement Sister Caroline served as a caregiver to family members.



Sister Pauline Cinquini, SC

Entered: 1958 + Date of Death: 12/24/15 + Age: 82

Sister Pauline's ministry in education spanned thirteen years. After two years at Xavier Center in Convent Station, NJ, she and several sisters began the Elizabeth Seton House of Prayer. Sister Pauline ministered in the Charismatic Renewal Program, in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, prayer, and retreats. As a talented musician, she was an active member of the Sisters of Charity choir.



Sister Rita Elizabeth Moon, SC

Entered: 1947 + Date of Death: 1/10/16 + Age: 89

Sister Rita taught in elementary schools and CCD programs for thirty years before being missioned to St. Peter in Poughkeepsie where she served for twenty years. During these years she served as Director of the Learning Center, taught in the parish CCD program, and filled in as a substitute teacher.



Sister Rosemary O'Donnell, SC

Entered: 1946 + Date of Death: 1/17/16 + Age: 88

Sister Rosemary's first ministry was in elementary education where she taught for fifteen years. Her next ministry was working as a Religious Education Coordinator and Religion Teacher. She continued to work in the field of Religious Education as the Director of Programs until 1997. She then volunteered with Life Experience Faith Sharing Associates where she served the homeless until 2007.



Sister Maureen Dunn, SC

Entered: 1960 + Date of Death: 02/08/16 + Age: 73

As a second year novice, Sister Michael was diagnosed with an inoperable and malignant brain tumor. Despite the dire prognosis, prayers for a miracle were offered to Mother Seton. After limited surgery and treatment Sr. Maureen not only recovered, she flourished, to the amazement of the medical professionals. She would go on to devote 28 years to education as a teacher and administrator, to work for the Congregation as Mission Effectiveness Coordinator, and to volunteer at the Convent of Mary the Queen for fifteen years.



Two Bicentennials

Continued from page 9

Sisters, Church, and City Grow Together

The growing population of orphan girls and boys in the RCOA at St. Patrick's made it imperative to raise money to build a new five-story brick building, and it was already too small when it opened in 1826. By then, the Church of New York had a new bishop, John Dubois. While the appointment of a Frenchman did not sit well with most of New York's Irish and German Catholics, the Sisters were pleased to welcome Dubois, who had served as the ecclesiastical superior of Mother Seton's community since 1811. The Sisters' ministries expanded during Dubois' time: they began nine schools, academies, and orphanages in Manhattan and Brooklyn.

When Dubois died in 1842, his auxiliary, John Hughes, who had administered the diocese during Dubois' final years of illness, was named to succeed him. In the judgment of noted church historian Msgr. Thomas Shelley, "For better or for worse, no bishop or archbishop of New York before or since has had as profound an impact on New York Catholicism as John Hughes." (Shelley, p. 107)

Sisters of Charity would surely agree. During Hughes' twenty-five-year tenure, the Sisters opened schools, academies, orphanages, and two hospitals in every part of the Archdiocese as well as in New Jersey, Connecticut, and Halifax, Nova Scotia. Most significantly for us, Hughes set in motion the events that would establish the Sisters of Charity of New York as an independent community in 1846 and forever bind them to New York's church and its people.

Reference: *The Archdiocese of New York: The Bicentennial History 1808-2008*, Msgr. Thomas Shelley (2007, Editions du Signe).

Margaret F. Grace Lecture

"WHERE DO I FIND HOPE?"

Dorothy Day and the Solution of Love:

*A Conversation with Robert Ellsberg,
John L. Allen Jr., and
Sr. Simone Campbell*

April 12, 2016
7 p.m. | Smith Hall
College of Mount Saint Vincent



"We have all known
the long loneliness and
we have learned that
the only solution is love
and that love comes
with community."

Robert Ellsberg is editor-in-chief and publisher of Orbis Books, author of *All Saints*, and a former managing editor of *The Catholic Worker*.

John L. Allen Jr. is associate editor of the *The Boston Globe* and *Crux*, a senior Vatican analyst for CNN, and has published multiple books on the Vatican and Catholic affairs.

Sr. Simone Campbell, SSS is an American Roman Catholic sister, attorney, poet, and social justice advocate, who has gained national recognition as the executive director of NETWORK.

For more information and to register,
visit: mountsaintvincent.edu/grace



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SCNY NEWS

Three Jubilarians Celebrate 205 Years of Service

Congratulations to Sisters Maria Louis Octavio and Elizabeth Stelmack, who celebrated 65 years, and Sister Marion Halpin (see page 10, bottom) who celebrated 75 years as Sisters of Charity of New York on February 2, 2016.

Gratitude and blessings to our Sisters for their loving service to the people of God.



Hudson River Healthcare Christmas Celebration

Sister Katherine Seibert, SC, MD, was on hand on December 17 to help the children served by the Hudson River Healthcare celebrate Christmas. Sister Katherine, who has cared for patients at the clinic since 2005, served as one of Santa's helpers. Over 400 local children were the lucky recipients of gifts donated by staff, local businesses and pharmacies, area churches, and the Sisters of Charity. A wonderful day was had by all, children and adults alike. (As seen in *Sullivan County Democrat*)



Sister Katherine Seibert (standing in the back) helped Santa distribute gifts to Sullivan County children.

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Please Join Us on Monday, May 2, 2016

2016 Spring Benefit

In Support of Our Ministries to those Living in Poverty

Honoring

**2016 FLAME OF
CHARITY AWARD**
Reverend Monsignor Donald Sakano
Pastor, Basilica of Saint Patrick's Old Cathedral



And

**2016 GRACE STRAZZIRE
HUMANITARIAN AWARD**
Sister Dominica Rocchio, SC, EdD
Former Regional Coordinator,
Sisters of Charity of New York
Former Secretary of Education and
Superintendent of Schools, Archdiocese of Newark



The Water Club
500 E 30th Street, NYC
6–9 pm

*For more information
Call 718-549-9200 Ext. 239
or email amgardiner@scny.org*