



THE SISTERS OF CHARITY OF NEW YORK

Living Lives of Love

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Jubilarians

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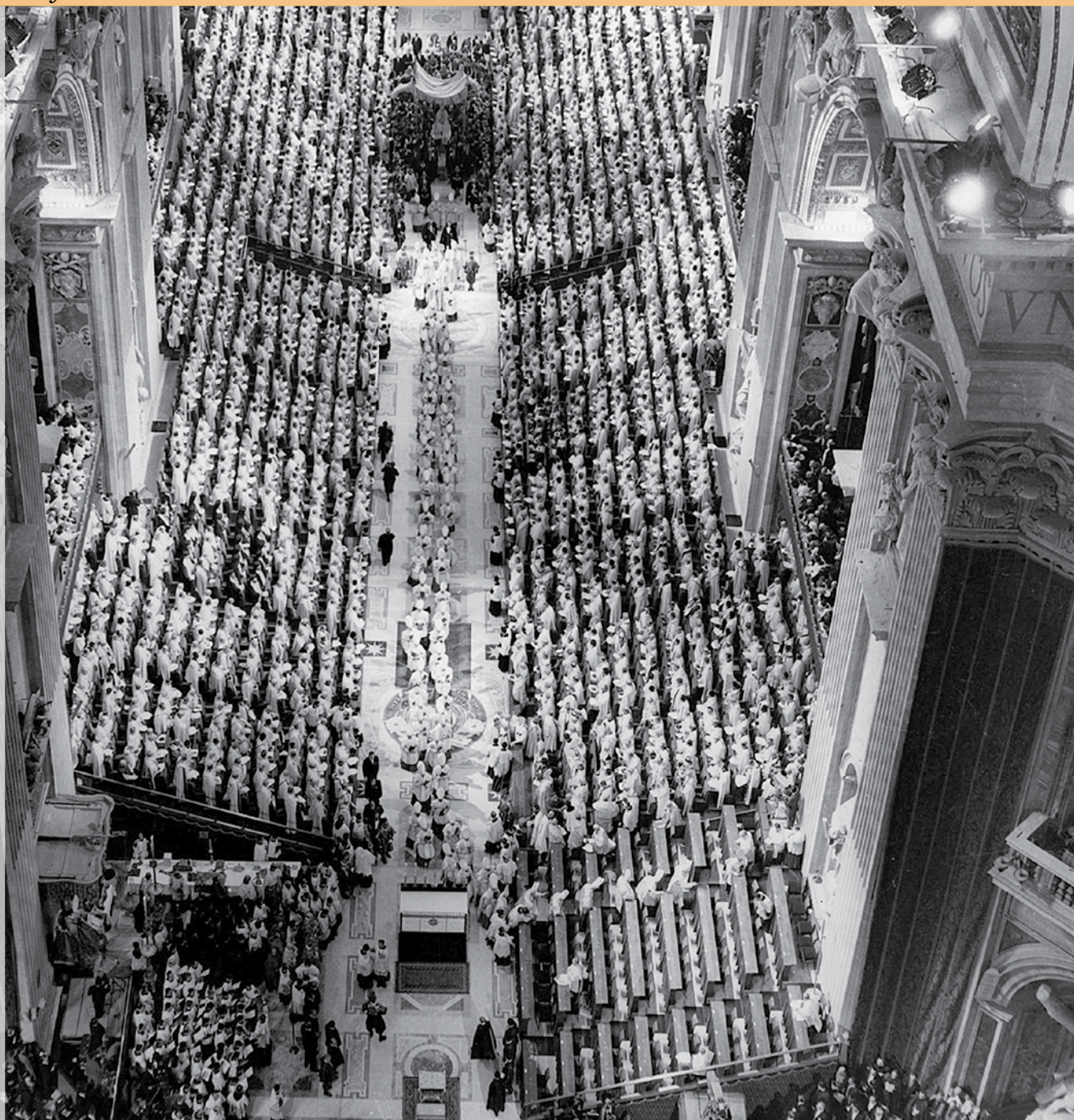
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SISTERS
of CHARITY
NEW YORK

*Vatican II at 50:
the Spirit Ever New*

Letter from the President

Dear Friends,

On October 11th we marked the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council, in 1962.

When we gathered for Midnight Mass in the chapel at Mount Saint Vincent on that long-ago night, we had no idea of how the Council would change our lives. Now, thinking back to that singular time, we give thanks for the fidelity of the world's bishops to the voice of the Spirit. Their four years of thought, dialogue, and decision-making planted seeds that altered our sense of the Roman Catholic Church, and of ourselves, forever.

Our little red paperbacks of the Council's documents have long since fallen apart. But the words flowered in our sense of Church not as a building, or simply a hierarchy, but as the People of God. We heard its universal call to holiness, and learned to look for the source of human dignity, the image of God, in all human beings, lay or religious, Jews, Muslims, Christians, or nonbelievers. In house, we tried to read the "signs of the times" as we responded to the Council's call for renewal within religious congregations. We gradually got used to the priest facing the congregation, and liturgy in the vernacular.

We cherished above all the spirit of joy and hope which Pope John XXIII embodied so richly. We realized as never before that we—and you—are all "in this together." And as the years went on, and structures seemed to crumble, and numbers diminished, and the world often showed a face that looked little like a divine image, we have grown even more convinced that we hold in our earthen vessels a treasure from the Council Fathers.

Fifty years have been just a start in plumbing its depths, and re-fashioning a world, Church, and Congregation that live up to the Council vision: "let there be unity in what is necessary, freedom in what is doubtful, and charity in everything" (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*, 92).

May our rereading of the Council documents lead us to a deeper commitment to our mission to be Christ in the world He has given us. And may our memories of the Church in Council confirm us in the knowledge that fifty years on, the Spirit still hovers over that very bent world.

Peace,



Sr. Jane Iannucelli, SC
President



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.



CONTRIBUTORS

Sr. Regina Bechtle, SC
Sr. Maryellen Blumlein, SC
Sr. Constance Brennan, SC
Sr. Carol De Angelo, SC
Bill Hurley, SC Associate
Sr. A. Jean Iannone, SC
Sr. Mary E. Mc Cormick, SC
Sr. Patricia McGowan, SC
Sr. Mary Lou McGrath, SC

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Sr. Joy Pellegrino, SC
Sr. Dominica Rocchio, SC

EDITOR

Elena Miranda, SC Associate

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Cover photo:

The Second Vatican Council was convened by Pope John XXIII on October 11, 1962, bringing together cardinals and bishops from all over the world in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome.



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Sisters of Charity Jubilarians Celebrated

The year 1962 was a momentous one for the Catholic Church and the world.

Representatives from 85 nations and international organizations gathered in Rome for an Ecumenical Council; John Glenn rocketed around the earth three times and James Meredith was the first African American to go through the doors of Ole Miss as a student.

Twenty five years later, the Church opened the cause for canonization of Bishop Oscar Romero of El Salvador; the first heart-lung transplant took place and the United States Supreme Court upheld affirmative action.

In the years since, each of these historic occasions greatly influenced the lives of seven Sisters of Charity who celebrated their Golden and Silver Anniversaries this past September 8th.

The celebration began in the Chapel of the Immaculate Conception at Mount Saint Vincent when Sr. Jane Iannucelli, President of the Congregation, welcomed the Jubilarians as they returned to the “family estate...a fitting place” as it is written in Leviticus, to continue “a long and honored tradition to celebrate a Jubilee.”

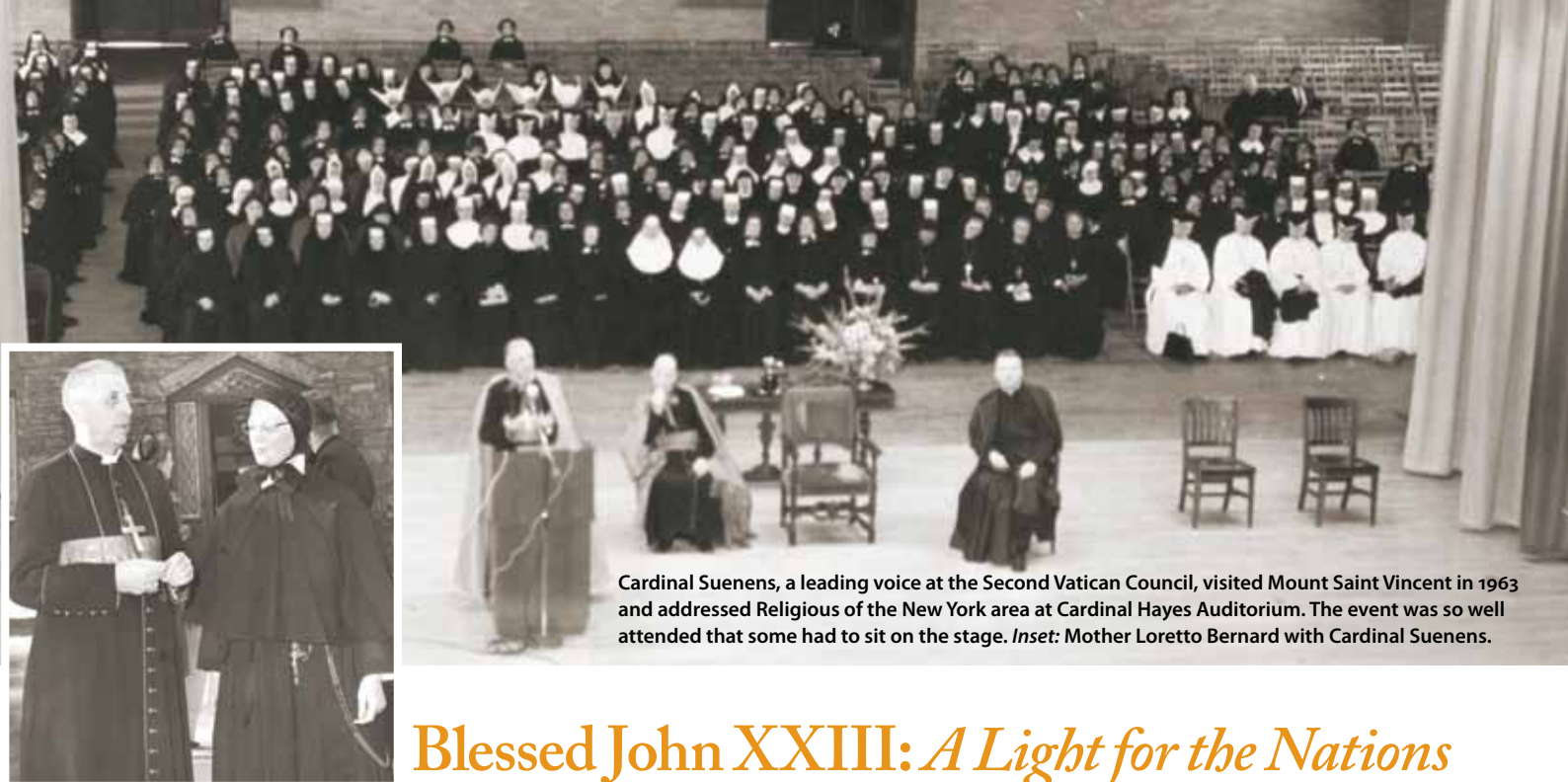
Msgr. John Graham, celebrant of the Mass, called the day a special

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by Sr. Patricia McGowan, SC

The Jubilarians gathered for the official portrait on the day of their celebration. **Standing from left:** Sisters Dominica Rocchio, Kathleen Doherty, Mary Benedict, Ellen Rose O’Connell, and Regina Bechtle. **Sitting from left:** Sisters Ann Marie Lafferty and Arleen Ketchum.





Cardinal Suenens, a leading voice at the Second Vatican Council, visited Mount Saint Vincent in 1963 and addressed Religious of the New York area at Cardinal Hayes Auditorium. The event was so well attended that some had to sit on the stage. Inset: Mother Loretto Bernard with Cardinal Suenens.

Blessed John XXIII: *A Light for the Nations*

by Sr. Regina Bechtle, SC

A month after I began my life as a Sister of Charity, Pope John XXIII opened a new chapter in the Church's story by convening the Second Vatican Council. To my 18-year-old eyes, the Council was a wondrous spectacle, signaling hope and possibility for the Church I loved.

Later, after studying theology, I realized just how transformative the Council was. Much of its dynamism, I learned, was set in motion by a man who looked more like a grandfather than a prophet.

A peasant by birth and a pastor at heart, Pope John stayed close to the needs of people in a rapidly changing world. The Council he convoked would renew the Church to spread the light of Christ's love to all, not just Catholics.

My congregation's leaders took seriously the Council's call to rediscover the core of our mission and to re-examine our lives. For our daily meditations we prayed with the latest Council documents. John XXIII's openness to the "joys and hopes, griefs and anxieties" of the world (GS, 1) shaped my sense of ministry. I was not above or apart from the people I served; *they* had much to teach *me*.

Pope John trusted that God's Spirit was always at work in the world, so he welcomed the good wherever he found it, even in non-Christians and nonbelievers. He saw God's light shining through "the signs of the times" and believed the Spirit would show him how to respond. Hopeful and resilient, he took the long view and didn't let small setbacks

discourage him. At perplexing times in my own life, I try to remember the evening prayer attributed to him, "It's Your Church, God. I'm going to bed." God is indeed in charge!

John XXIII modeled key leadership skills of building consensus, inviting questions, using humor gently, and keeping focus on the mission. He wanted Vatican II's tone to be pastoral, not reproofing, its style collaborative, not dictatorial, its language gentle, not judgmental. He directed the Church's attention outward, using its influence to address pressing world issues of justice, human dignity, poverty, war and peace in encyclicals like *Mater et Magistra* and *Pacem in Terris*.

For Pope John, differences were not barriers. Even—especially—with those of divergent opinions, he opened doors to dialogue and built bridges of relationship. He guided the Church through unprecedented changes by believing in the grace of the possible, that is, the way things always were isn't the way they have to be forever.

As we live through times of constant change, may the example of Blessed Pope John XXIII, a holy and wholly human pastor, leader and prophet, light our way. ■



Miss Regina Bechtle as a Postulant in 1963.



Mother Loretto Bernard in the modified habit c. 1972.



Sr. Regina at 50th Jubilee on September 8, 2012.

This reflection appears in the October 2012 issue of *Living with Christ*—www.livingwithchrist.us
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Where were you when Vatican II happened? What do you remember about it? What impact did it have on you?



Maryellen Blumlein, SC: I was just a young child, but I remember when the altar was turned around for Mass and the priest faced us, instead of having his back toward us.

Associate Elena Miranda: I remember one concrete outcome of Vatican II's changes. When I made my First Communion in 1966—I was 8—it was the first time the pastor allowed our families to sit with us during the Mass.



Donna Dodge, SC: As sophomores in Cardinal Spellman, we used the *Documents of Vatican II* for class readings. My red paperback copy was dog-eared by the end of the year!

Dominica Rocchio, SC: [Late on October 10, 1962, a special Mass was held in the Chapel of the Immaculate Conception at Mount Saint Vincent to coincide with the opening of the Council in Rome. Sr. Dominica with the other postulants, novices and professed sisters attended.] The Midnight Mass in the Chapel was



celebrated by Archbishop Maguire. I was thrilled on several levels—Midnight Mass was always something associated with Christmas and here we were in the middle of October, so the opening of the Council was truly a big event. My birthday is on October 10 so I was also thrilled to be up and about and not in bed, even if I was on my way to the Chapel. I remember that the college students were there in academic dress, further emphasizing the importance of this event for everyone on campus—the whole MSV world was represented. After this I remember that the prayer we prayed every morning for the success of the Council had special meaning, and whatever news came from Rome was special as well.

Associate Peggy Cekoric: Some of my religion teachers at St. Peter's High School, Staten Island, especially Sisters Anne Marie Cleary and Angela Higgins, had begun to study theology. They brought back to their students concepts like the primacy of conscience, though they told us we weren't mature enough yet to apply it! So when Vatican II began (I was a young nurse at St. Vincent's, Staten Island), I was ready to receive its message of "open the windows." ■



Sisters at St. Joseph's Convent Yonkers, NY

by Sr. Constance Brennan, SC

The Sisters in St. Joseph's Convent are as involved in their community as time allows. Sisters Nora Hearty, Ann Marie Lagan, Mary T. Higgins, Connie Brennan, Lorraine Cooper, and Frances Keegan respond to local and catechetical needs as they see them. Perhaps the most unusual service is provided by Sr. Nora Hearty.

Sr. Nora is currently tutoring a bi-lingual first grader who is in a Montessori School. Each afternoon between 4 and 5 PM in the convent finds Sr. Nora and

six-year-old Victoria reading one of the books assigned for homework. Victoria's mother, who struggles with English, is grateful to Sr. Nora for her time and expertise. She has said many times that Sr. Nora has taken a large weight from her shoulders.

Victoria had books to read over the summer: Sr. Nora worked with her, Sr. Frances made a chart, the rest of the Sisters praised her progress, and Sr. Frances procured a first-grade desk for Victoria from Visitation School. Sr. Nora was and is a master teacher of primary grades who is known in educational circles for the workshops she gave to first-year teachers. How could she foresee that the skills she was noted for in the past would be so useful in her present life? As they say, "once a teacher, always a teacher."

During the summer, many weekend afternoons found Sisters Mary Higgins and Ann Marie Lagan



Sr. Nora Hearty, SC

registering students for the Catechetical program in St. Joseph's Parish. They also oversee the finances of the program. The program is large, and the families are struggling, so the Sisters are compassionate in working out payment routines. Saturday mornings find Sisters Frances, Lorraine and Connie off to catechize. They enjoy the students as well as the teaching. St. Joseph's Sisters are also involved in the monthly Neighborhood Association meetings.

St. Joseph's Neighborhood Association was founded in the 1980s and since then has worked to better conditions on the Ashburton Corridor in South Yonkers. The Sisters of St. Joseph's are happy to be able to contribute in whatever way they can to an ever-changing neighborhood. ■

"Everything that Dr. Wedge touches is made more beautiful and more effective than it was before. I am a better person for having known her."

—Dr. Morton Flexer



At left: Sister Alma with her mother in Staten Island, where she served with kindness and love.

Sister Alma Wedge —One Hundred Years of Service, Loyalty, and Friendship

by Bill Hurley, SC Associate

The late Nobel Prize Winning Scientist, Albert Szent-Gyorgyi, once said:

*God, let me praise you by improving
my corner of your creation, by filling this
little world of mine with light, warmth,
goodwill and happiness.*

Anyone who has known Sr. Alma knows she has done just this throughout her years as a Sister of Charity. In her years of service, Sr. Alma truly fulfilled her strong desire to be with the poor. In her earlier years Sr. Alma taught in several elementary and high schools. So effective was she as a teacher that some of her students from St. Barnabas who were in her eighth-grade class in 1952, have maintained contact with her to this day.

For 17 years, from 1934 through 1951, Sr. Alma served as the director of high school girls at St. Joseph's Hall in Brooklyn, a home for dependent children. Her loving guidance and helpfulness was genuinely appreciated by the youngsters under her care. Several of the girls, now women with families of their own have also kept in touch.

With her PhD in Sociology, secured from St. John's University in 1966, Sr. Alma taught at St. John's University, Rutgers University, Newark

State University, Stevens Institute, and Kean College (now Kean University).

There have been many firsts in Sr. Alma's life:

- » First female officer in the American Sociological Society;
- » First woman to teach in St John's University Men's College;
- » First Catholic sister to work for an Episcopal Bishop in New Jersey, as the Director of a Residential Treatment Center as well as being fundraiser and administrator of the youth centers;
- » First woman religious to address youth groups during the riots of the 1960s, in a Newark synagogue;
- » First person in New York State to be appointed Director of Public Education for the deinstitutionalization of the developmentally disabled, and
- » First woman from New York State to become District Governor of Toastmasters International. She remained active in Toastmasters for over 30 years and was often called upon for her expertise. Today she is a member of Toastmasters' Hall of Fame.

As if that weren't enough work to fill two lifetimes, the Borough President of Staten Island issued a Proclamation in 1989 in which he further

pointed out that Sr. Alma served as a lecturer at Staten Island Hospital and St. Vincent's Medical Center School of Nursing.

Sr. Alma was also an instructor and motivator for United Cerebral Palsy, Upjohn, and other social service agencies. She served on the board of Amethyst House, a rehabilitation center for alcoholic women, as well as the board of Meals on Wheels.

In her retirement years, Sr. Alma has tutored some of the seminarians from Dunwoodie as they journeyed towards their ordination to the priesthood.

Sr. Alma has also been a loyal friend to many and has received an abundance of loyalty in return. No one has been more loyal than her dear friend, Margaret Petlicka. Margaret and Sr. Alma met almost seventy years ago and have been a tremendous example of friendship to all who know them. Margaret is well aware of Sr. Alma's unswerving commitment to the works of the Sisters of Charity. This, Margaret says, has always been her inspiration. It was while Sr. Alma was working for the poor that they first met. Sr. Alma was



Sr. Alma with her dear friend, Margaret.

then the director of the high school girls at St. Joseph's Hall in Brooklyn and Sr. Jane Hoehn, a high school classmate of Margaret's, is the one who encouraged Margaret to become a volunteer with Sr. Alma.

Margaret tells a story regarding Sr. Alma—

"It was quite an experience to witness Sr. Alma's determination and creativity transform what was essentially a crumbling building into a beautifully furnished home, where the girls—about 98 of them—were pleased to bring their friends. Many of the girls, who once felt that their futures were bleak, became self-assured, caring, and independent young women under Sr. Alma's firm but loving direction."

Dr. Morton Flexer, former administrator of St. Vincent's Medical Center in Staten Island, once said of Sr. Alma, "Everything that Dr. Wedge touches is made more beautiful and more effective than it was before. I am a better person for having known her."

Congratulations to you, Sr. Alma, on your 100th BIRTHDAY! The entire congregation is very proud of you and your remarkable achievements as a Sister of Charity. ■



Sr. Alma with Margaret (standing) and Sr. Margaret Kelly.

A Legacy Lives On

by Sr. Regina Bechtle, SC

St. Vincent Window (from St. Vincent's Medical Center, Manhattan) at St. Joseph's Regional Medical Center, Paterson, NJ, installed and dedicated on the Feast of St. Vincent de Paul.

On September 27th Sr. Karen Helfenstein represented Sr. Jane Iannucelli, the President of the Sisters of Charity of New York, at the blessing ceremony of a stained glass window of St. Vincent de Paul. It had been transferred from the closed St. Vincent's Hospital in New York to St. Joseph's Hospital in Paterson, New Jersey, which is sponsored by the Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth.

On behalf of all the Sisters of Charity of New York and Associates, with all the staff members of St. Vincent's Hospital through the years, Sr. Karen expressed heartfelt

gratitude for providing a new home for this beautiful window depicting St. Vincent. "The bond between the Sisters of Charity of New York and the Sisters of Charity of New Jersey is now strengthened in another very particular way," said Sr. Karen.

St. Joseph's Hospital and a generous donor have made the transfer of this iconic work of art possible. The family of Charity has taken Vincent in when he lost his home of 110 years. ■





Life Lessons and Remembrance

by Sr. Maryellen Blumlein, SC

Those of us old enough to remember September 11, 2001, know exactly where we were when we first learned of the attack. It might, therefore, be difficult for us to realize that many students in our schools today were not yet born or were mere toddlers when this devastating event happened. The students in grades 6, 7, and 8 in Our Lady of Angels School in the Bronx not only watched and discussed a video about the rescue attempts on that fateful day, but they were also privileged to hear a talk from one of the FDNY first responders.

Ms. Angela Xisto, the junior high Social Studies teacher at O.L.A., spends time each year making her students aware of the horrific events of September 11th. After previewing the video, she decided to contact Chief Jonas, a New York firefighter who was among the many first responders at the World Trade Center. On September 28, 2012, Chief Jonas was greeted by the principal, Sr. Mary Catherine Cleary SC, Ms. Xisto and the anxiously waiting students.

Chief Jonas told the story of how he and other firefighters spent their time in the towers. As workers were descending the stairs to exit the building, the firefighters were climbing up in order to try to save anyone that they could reach. Through a power point presentation

and first-hand account, Chief Jonas explained what it was like to be part of this rescue effort. He told of their extreme efforts to assist as many people as they could despite the dense smoke and the deafening noise. His story, and the stories of all the first responders, is one of great courage, heroism and service. He was able to tell the students that all of the members of his company sur-

vived and went on to continue to serve all in the City of New York.

The members of the FDNY family watch out for each other. Their primary job is to fight fires and save lives and they count on each other for support. The World Trade Center disaster exemplified tremendous effort on

the part of many individuals, and lives were lost, but because of people like Chief Jonas and others like him, many people survived. It is an experience he will never forget, yet he is grateful that he was there and able to serve.

And Ms. Xisto's purpose in inviting Chief Jonas to speak to the students had many sides to it. But most important is the sense of doing and being for others. Just prior to 9/11/2012 all of the students in O.L.A. School—from the pre-K to the eighth grade—wrote down something that they would do on 9/11 for another person. The emphasis was on service and caring. No matter how

small the contribution, it would make someone's life a little better.

In addition to the strength of the academic programs in the school, O.L.A. also places great emphasis on service. Each student, regardless of religion, is taught the gospel values and is asked to live them according to their age and ability. While the service that Chief Jonas exemplified to the older students is most extraordinary, it helped them to witness the love and compassion which they can bring to those whom they encounter.

Note: Our Lady of Angels School, opened in 1928, staffed by the Sisters of Charity, joined in recent years by a lay staff, is a Catholic elementary school in the northwest section of the Bronx. The students are the children of hard-working families who join with faculty to assure that all of the graduates go on to higher education. It is because of the strong foundation that they receive in Our Lady of Angels School that the students succeed in their future lives. ■



Principal Sr. Mary Cleary, SC, and Chief Jonas.



The Seton Service and Leadership Program at the College of Mount Saint Vincent

Sponsored by the Sisters of Charity of New York

by Sr. Mary Lou McGrath, SC

The objective of the Seton Scholars Leadership Program is for students to become greater servant leaders in the spirit of Saints Vincent de Paul and Elizabeth Seton, while pursuing academic excellence, community development, and an ongoing commitment to service.

A full room and board scholarship is offered to freshman students who have an outstanding academic profile, have demonstrated community service, and possess leadership skills. Students must maintain a 3.0 GPA and continue to be a resident student for annual renewal of the scholarship.

The program was begun in the Fall semester of 2011. The Scholarship Committee consists of the Director of the program, the Associate Director of Admissions, the Director of Financial Aid, a volunteer Coordinator from the Sisters of Charity, a member of the Leadership Team of the Sisters of Charity, and a current student in the program. Each year up to ten students may be selected for this program.

Students are expected to maintain a 3.0 GPA, to continue as residential students, to successfully and reliably fulfill their commitments to community service, and to actively participate in the reflective components of the program. All college and residential policies must be observed.

During the second year in the program, students would be expected to mentor younger students in the program and actively promote servant leadership opportunities to the entire student body.

With Sr. Mary Lou on the right, and Matt Shields on the left, the students in the program are (*from bottom, left to right*) Ciara Rosa, Marisa Rosario, Celine Florentino, and Amy Fox; *middle row*: Michelle dela Paz, Catherine Reiss, Ashley Schwiederek, and Kathryn Dalton; *standing*: Adam Derouin, James Wilkins, Kevin Costello, Anthony Gentile, Sean Shea, Joseph Senisi, and Shannon Koch.

The participants were introduced to the program by Sr. Jane Iannucelli, President of the Sisters of Charity, and the purpose, procedures, and requirements were explained to them. An important part of the program is to train the students in reflection on service, effective leadership, and commitment. There were also reflection sessions on identity, the Vincentian spirit of service, dealing with stress, the rhythm of college life, peace and justice issues, and how to respond to injustice with love. The students practiced the beatitudes by working at Habitat for Humanity, seeing the dignity of those who are served. They attended the Sisters of Charity Vow Renewal ceremony in December and finally shared concluding thoughts and evaluated the year's experience.

Some comments from student participants were:

- » I have given time to these people and they have given me so much more.
- » I have learned so many different things, different sides of community service, and I had fun doing them.
- » I became aware that I was giving joy to someone else.

Continued on page 15

“Birth Day” for there were two births to celebrate that day: the day was the feast of the Nativity of Mary as well as the date when these Sisters began their new lives as members of a religious community.

The chapel echoed with the joyful prayers of the families and friends who were integral parts of their collective 325 years of service to God’s people, years during which these women have, like St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, continued to

meet the grace of each new moment. The celebration continued with a reception for all in Smith Hall.

And it seems only fitting that the jubilation continues as we celebrate the church’s “Year of Faith.”



Sister Regina Bechtle, SC, is grateful to her parents Blanche and Bill, who taught her and her sister, Linda, how to live good lives and love their faith. They supported her desire to join the Sisters of Charity, the community that has been part of her life since school days at Epiphany in Manhattan and Elizabeth Seton High School in Yonkers. She entered the Congregation at 18, just as Vatican II was turning the Church outward to the world. Studies in physics, then theology, led to high school teaching, parish youth ministry, three mind-and-heart-expanding years teaching theology at Maryknoll. Congregational service consisted of planning and research and leadership team membership, and directing a leadership and spirituality center at the College of Mount Saint Vincent.



A lifelong interest in St. Elizabeth Seton led to her present ministry as a quasi-official public relations person for the Charity spirit and story, through writing, retreats and talks to groups here and in other countries. She’s especially privileged to have co-edited Mother Seton’s collected writings and, along the way, to have met many wonderful people, especially in the Sisters of Charity Federation and the Vincentian Family.

Sister Mary Benedict, SC, her twin sister, Christine, and three other siblings were born and raised on Staten Island to Anastasia and Stephen Benedict, where she attended St. Peter’s Elementary and High Schools and St. Vincent’s Hospital School of Nursing. After receiving her RN, Mary worked as a registered nurse for the past 38 years. She became an Associate of the Sisters of Charity in 1985, and entered the Congregation in 1987. She continued her ministry in nursing, working with handicapped children as a school nurse at the Kennedy Child Study Center in Manhattan.



During this time, she completed her BSN at the College of Mount Saint Vincent and then began working in a childcare center and a children’s rehabilitation center.

In 2005 Sr. Mary switched to geriatric nursing and began working with the “Senior Sisters” living at the Convent of Mary the Queen in Yonkers. Presently she continues to work with the retired and semiretired Sisters at St. Patrick’s Villa in Nanuet. Like St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, foundress of the Sisters of Charity, Sr. Mary Benedict exemplifies kindness, compassion, and a deep faith in her God.

Sister Kathleen Doherty, SC, was born in Jersey City to Peg and John Doherty and raised in Brooklyn with her two sisters, Margaret and Mary Ann. She traveled across the waters on the Brooklyn Ferry with her sister Margaret to attend St John’s Villa Academy in Staten Island. Kathy was a curious child and a curious student at St. John’s. She was drawn to religious life and to chemistry!



After making vows, Sr. Kathy taught in New Jersey, the Bronx, New Rochelle, and Manhattan. Her students were drawn to her fun loving ways, athletic pursuits (biking, skiing, hiking) and her real and lasting interest in them and their lives. To this day they call when in need of some support and good advice. Yes, she taught chemistry and religion in a way that conveyed her love and care.

A deep desire and persistent call to be with the poor took Sr. Kathy to the Dominican Republic to study Spanish and to La Salle Academy in lower Manhattan. This call to be actively ministering with the poor led Sr. Kathy to spend a year at Aletheia House of Prayer with Sr. Eileen Storey and eventually to transfer from the Baptistine Congregation to the Sisters of Charity.

It is now 50 years since Sr. Kathy began this journey in religious life. She was surrounded by family, friends from the Sister of St. John the Baptist, Sisters of Charity and students from the places where she met them and the continued life she shares with them.

Sister Arleen K. Ketchum, SC, was born in New Haven, CT, but spent most of her early years growing up in White Plains, Hartsdale, and Pleasantville with her parents Mae and Rollin, her sister Marge, and her brother Ralph. She attended St. John the Evangelist School in White Plains from first grade through her junior year in high school when the school closed. It was here that she met and loved the Sisters of Charity. From the time she was in grammar school, Arleen knew she wanted to become one of them, and she entered the Sisters of Charity in 1962 soon after her graduation from high school.



Sr. Arleen's Master of Education Degree with a specialty in Early Childhood Education from Boston College prepared her for her work with children in the primary grades at St. Barnabas and Nativity, both in the Bronx, St. Joseph's in Florida, NY, and St. Mary's in Yonkers. For 24 of these years she lived and worked with the same group of Sisters who provided quality education for their students. After completing a sabbatical program at Berakiah in New Hampshire, Sr. Arleen was asked by the Congregation to open the Elizabeth Seton Women's Center in Manhattan. Sixteen years later, in 2011–2012, the center served over 1,600 women who came to programs, women's AA meetings, spiritual direction, or counseling.

Sister Ann Marie Lafferty, SC, formerly Sr. Elizabeth Ann, is a true alumna of the Sisters of Charity Federation. She was taught by the Halifax Sisters of Charity in her Brooklyn elementary school. When her parents Edward and Marie moved Ann Marie and her brother John to New Jersey, she was taught by the Convent Station Sisters of Charity in high school. Ann Marie was then taught by Sisters of Charity of New York at the College of Mount Saint Vincent, the congregation she would enter upon graduation in 1962.



She began her ministry in the field of education and spent 22 years at St. Athanasius in the Bronx, as teacher and administrator. During that time she also earned an MA in Religious Education and a Certificate in Administration and Supervision from Fordham University. She began working in the field of finance in 1990, earned an MBA in Finance from Manhattan College and was the Congregation Treasurer for 11 years.

At present, Sr. Anne Marie employs her educational and financial expertise as the Assistant Director of Financial Aid at the College of Mount Saint Vincent, her alma mater.

Sister Ellen Rose O'Connell, SC, is one of seven children born to parents Elizabeth and John; two of her sisters are members of religious communities. Sr. Anne O'Connell is also a Sister of Charity of New York and Sr. Mary O'Connell is a Sister of the Holy Child.

Her early ministry as teacher and principal took her to many parts of New York: St. Barnabas High School, the Bronx, St. Joseph by the Sea High School, Staten Island, Resurrection Academy, Rye, St. Gabriel High School, New Rochelle, Holy Trinity, Mamaroneck, St. Paul, Manhattan, and Sacred Heart, Hartsdale.

In 1989, after a year at the Jesuit School of Theology, Sr. Ellen Rose's ministry entered new territory. She became a Pastoral Care counselor for the Visiting Nurse Hospice Program of the Bronx and began her work with the Sisters of Charity Associate Relationship Program. For the next eight years she was Executive Co-Director and Executive Director of the North American Conference of Associates and Religious (NACAR).

This was followed by three years as Director of Mission Integration at the John A. Coleman Children's Rehabilitation Center in White Plains. In 2009 she became the Director of Pastoral Care at the Convent of Mary the Queen.



Sister Dominica Rocchio, SC, EdD, formerly Sr. Regina Seton, is one of three children born to Antoinette and Anthony Rocchio. She was raised in Manhattan and the Bronx along with her sister Carmela and brother Peter. She attended Our Lady of Mt. Carmel School where she first met the Sisters of Charity. Her high school years were spent at St. Jean Baptiste, and after graduation from Fordham University, she entered the Congregation hoping to be a teacher.



Sr. Dominica's hopes were certainly fulfilled; she spent 41 years in education as a high school teacher, department head, assistant principal and principal in several schools in the Archdiocese of New York (St. Barnabas, Academy of the Resurrection, Cathedral, St. Joseph by-the-Sea, and St. Gabriel). Twenty-six of the 41 years were spent in Central Office work—12 as Associate Superintendent for Secondary Schools in the Archdiocese of New York, and 14 as Secretary for Education and Superintendent of Schools in the Archdiocese of Newark.

On the national level, she has contributed to education as a member of the Committee on Education and the Public Policy Committee for the USCCB. She has also been Vice President of the Chief Administrators of Catholic Education division of NCEA, and served as a member of the Board of Directors of NCEA. She has served several terms as a Commissioner on the Middle States Commission for Secondary Schools.

Sr. Dominica has graduate degrees in English, Religious Education, and Educational Administration and Supervision. Her doctorate in Education is from Fordham University. Seton Hall University awarded her an honorary doctorate in 2007. She was elected to Congregation leadership in 2007 and reelected in 2011. ■

With Love and Appreciation We Remember...

Sr. Mildred Azevedo, SC (Sr. Maria Assumpta)

Entered: 1953 + Date of Death: 8/19/12 + Age: 79

"The care that she exhibited for staff, students, and parents was admirable and, in every sense of the word, inspiring."



Sr. Assumpta's first mission was St. Stephen's School in Manhattan but most of her education ministry was at the high school and college levels. She was missioned for ten years at the Academy of Mount St. Vincent in Tuxedo Park where many students were boarders, offering her guidance counseling experience beyond any textbook. Sr. Assumpta went on to serve as Director of Guidance at St.

Raymond Academy for Girls, and then returned to her alma mater, St. Gabriel's High School, New Rochelle, as Principal.

Sr. Mildred was elected a Regional Coordinator in 1975. She chaired the Constitution Committee with her steady, sensitive, and loving direction. She then served as Coordinator at St. Patrick's Villa, Academic Advisor at Elizabeth Seton College, Yonkers, and Iona College, New Rochelle. In 1994 she went to the College of Mount Saint Vincent as Academic Advisor to transfer students. After "retiring" she volunteered at the Sisters of Charity Multi-Service Center in Yonkers.

Sr. Rose Marie Galligan, SC (Sr. Thomas Regina)

Entered: 1944 + Date of Death: 9/16/12 + Age: 89

"The New York Foundling was very special to Sister Rose Marie."



Sr. Rose Marie's entire active ministry, beginning in 1946 and continuing for 54 years, was spent at The New York Foundling. She used her business acumen as a bookkeeper from 1946 to 1949 and from 1949 to 1967 she served in Personnel, Finance, and Support Services. Her ministry continued as Assistant Administrator for Finance for fourteen years and then in 1984 she became Special Assistant. Sr. Rose Marie retired in

1997 but continued to serve as a volunteer at the Foundling until 2000.

The New York Foundling was very special to Sister Rose Marie and, as a resident in the Convent of Mary the Queen, she enjoyed time reminiscing with others about her favorite place.

Sister Rose Marie and her sister, Mary, and brother, Thomas, remained especially close throughout their lives. Their care and love for each other was a special bond; they were truly a gift to one another.

Sr. Regina Michael Lowe, SC

Entered: 1942 + Date of Death: 8/22/12 + Age: 90

"Whether the children and families came from the Bronx or the Bahamas, Sr. Michael's care, compassion and love of God's people was apparent in all she did."



Sr. Regina Michael's teaching career began in the Bronx at Our Lady of Angels and then St. Raymond School. In 1950 she was missioned to the Bahamas where she taught at St. Francis Xavier School and St. Vincent's on Harbour Island until she became principal of Sacred Heart School. Back in the Bronx, Sr. Michael taught in St. Augustine School for the next 21 years. In 1985 she returned to the Bahamas to teach

at Our Lady's School in Nassau.

In 1999, Sr. Michael came back to New York to "retire" at St. Patrick's Villa, Nanuet, but continued serving by teaching English to immigrants. Throughout her life and in all her experiences, Sr. Regina Michael reflected the joy and enthusiasm of her God, whom she faithfully served for seventy years as a Sister of Charity. Sr. Michael's skill and kindness were shown time and time again during all of her ministries.

Sr. Elizabeth Mary O'Connor, SC

Entered: 1941 + Date of Death: 9/12/12 + Age: 89

"Sister Elizabeth was always a scholar who had a great love of learning."



Sr. Elizabeth's ministry in education took her from elementary to high school. She was a pioneer at Our Lady Star of the Sea in Staten Island and at St. Gregory's in Harrison. She also taught at Incarnation, Manhattan, St. Mary's, Yonkers, St. Joachim's, Beacon, Immaculate Heart of Mary, Scarsdale, St. Barnabas High School, Bronx and Resurrection Academy, Rye.

Sr. Elizabeth moderated the Forensic Club in many high schools. She developed personal relationships with her students and impressed upon them that, although they might not be winners, they would develop speaking skills that will benefit them throughout their lives.

Upon retirement Sr. Elizabeth returned to St. Barnabas High School, where she was Assistant Treasurer for ten years. Ever a lover of language and of "all things Irish," she joined Tara Circle's Cultural Program and studied Gaelic for three years. At the Convent of Mary the Queen her love of Community history showed in many of her recreational conversations.

Visit www.scny.org/memoriam.html for complete information about the Sisters' ministries.



Sr. Mary Persico, IHM, (left) conference facilitator, and Sr. Karen Helfenstein, SC.

Congregation Hosts Sponsorship Conference for Ministry Leaders

Life is no brief candle for me. It is a sort of splendid torch which I have got hold of for the moment, and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generations.

George Bernard Shaw

In a spirit of collaboration and with a deep sense of history and mission, Sr. Karen Helfenstein, Director of Sponsorship Services, opened the

2012 Sponsorship Conference with this quotation that fittingly summed up the meaning and purpose of the day. The conference was attended by 130 enthusiastic lay and religious ministry leaders.

The goals set for the Conference, held on September 29, 2012 in Smith Hall at the College of Mount Saint Vincent, were to strengthen the network of Sponsored Ministry colleagues, to reflect on the breadth and depth of the ministries, and to focus on the spirituality of leadership. Ministries represented were:

- » College of Mount Saint Vincent
- » Elizabeth Seton Pediatric Center
- » Elizabeth Seton Women's Center
- » Fox House
- » Life Experience and Faith Sharing
- » The New York Foundling
- » POTS (Part of the Solution)
- » Sisters Hill Farm
- » Saint Joseph's Medical Center
- » Sisters of Charity Housing Development Corporation
- » Sisters of Charity Multi-Service Center—Casa de Esperanza

The Conference was facilitated by Sr. Mary Persico, IHM. Working from documents prepared by each sponsored ministry, Sr. Mary noted the strengths and challenges common to all the ministries present. Using metaphors, she underscored the fact that the Sisters of Charity ministries have provided compassionate care and service to those in need for almost 200 years and in the hands of future generations, that tradition will continue.

The intention going forward is to formalize education and formation of leadership and boards to sustain the vitality of the mission. Preliminary plans are underway for the 2013 Sponsorship Conference. ■



Vincentian Family Explores Systemic Change

August 24–25, 2012 was a historic occasion and eight Sisters of Charity of New York and eight colleagues were privileged to be present! This workshop at Loyola House of Retreats in Morristown, NJ, was part of the ongoing Vincentian Family Systemic Change Project begun in 2006 and was a pilot

program for an overnight training to be held in other parts of the USA.

Regina Murphy, SC, co-chair of the Global Poverty Threshold Group, expressed an important part of the experience: “The presence of nearly 60 people from different sections of the ‘Family of Vincent’—all motivated by

the Charism of Charity and united in concern for people who are living in conditions of poverty—was an impressive experience of unity and collaboration. As one speaker said: “Imagine what we could effect if we all worked on a particular issue! The worldwide Family of Vincent numbers 2 million people in 155 countries.”

During the weekend, participants met in groups that included other Charity Family members. When we met as a SCNY group at the end of the weekend, we became aware of the richness in our diversity and unity and power to “love unto infinity” as we share and collaborate together. We were excited by the possibilities that lie before us and look forward to studying ways to implement systemic change concepts within the Sisters of Charity ministries and Sponsored Works.

Visit our website to read more about this workshop. ■

Sr. Carol DeAngelo, SC

CIVIL WAR REFLECTIONS:

*Sister Mary Ulrica O'Reilly (1815–1868)
Tells Her Story....*

by Sr. Mary E. Mc Cormick, SC

I walked through the large empty rooms of our recently vacated Motherhouse and Academy filled with memories of our brief time here before we had to sell the property to the city of New York to create a future Central Park. Along with the other Sisters assigned here, I cleaned, scrubbed, and prepared the still-holy space for service as St. Joseph's Military Hospital for sick and wounded Union soldiers.

In April 1862 our community was asked to serve as nurses by the Surgeon General of the United States. Beginning in October of that year, and until war's end, hundreds of men were sent to us, some from far away, all of them suffering from wounds inflicted on soul as well as body. Following doctor's orders, our Sisters did what they could to alleviate the pains of amputations, dysentery, and contagious diseases. Contrary to the convictions of some army administrators, we Sisters knew instinctively that healing requires more than bandages and medicine.

I got into trouble more than once with the surgeon in charge for trying to provide a touch of home for the men. Having received permission to prepare a Thanksgiving dinner, I went a little overboard in what was provided. I was forbidden to make any future purchases of food. But oh how the men enjoyed that meal!

Another run-in with a commanding officer happened during the Draft Riots of 1863. He received word that a contingent of rioters was marching on St. Joseph's Hospital and ordered me to remove the Sisters to safety. I refused, and went outside to meet the rioters, many of them desperate Irish immigrants. When they saw my resolve to protect the wounded soldiers within, they turned back. No blood was shed that day.

Sadly I recalled the number of younger men, boys, really, who had been troopers, drummers, and buglers. We housed them in a separate ward where they could cry and be comforted away from battle-hardened older men. One of our Sisters—we called her the Irish Nightingale—used to bring homemade candies and cakes to them every evening, and, accompanied on her guitar, used to sing them to sleep.

And so we continued in the days and months until Lee's surrender, bringing the comfort of a mother's touch to the sons of mothers far away. We stayed at the hospital until every man was discharged.

Note: Fifteen New York Sisters were part of the more than 600 women religious from many different communities who were part of the great effort of binding the wounds of war. ■



Sr. Ulrica O'Reilly's grave is marked with an Army badge in recognition of her service to the United States Military.

Material for this article taken from: *The Sisters of Charity of New York 1809–1959*, by Sr. Marie de Lourdes Walsh.

Chef Jean, sc



Chef Jean Recommends...

Roasted Apple Pies with Whipped Cream

Serves four

Ingredients

- 1 (9-inch) refrigerated rolled pie crust
- 2 medium Granny Smith apples, peeled
- ¼ cup granulated sugar
- 1 tablespoon ground cinnamon, plus extra for dusting
- ½ cup heavy cream
- 2 tablespoons powdered sugar

Special equipment:

- 3-inch round cookie cutter



Preparation



Place an oven rack in the center of the oven. Preheat the oven to 400°F. Line a baking sheet with a silpat or parchment paper sprayed with vegetable cooking spray.

Unroll the pie crust on a work surface. Using a 3-inch round cookie cutter, cut out 8 disks of pastry. Arrange the pastry disks on the prepared baking sheet. Using the tines of a fork, prick the pastry all over. Bake until brown and crispy, 8 to 10 minutes. Remove to a wire rack to cool completely, about 10 minutes.

Slice the bottom of the apples to create an even surface for cutting. Slice each apple into 6 (½-inch) slices. Cut each apple slice in half and remove any seeds or pieces of core. In a medium bowl, mix together the sugar and 1 tablespoon cinnamon. Add the apple slices and toss until coated. Shake off any excess mixture. Arrange the apple slices on the same baking sheet in a single layer. Bake until dark brown, about 12 to 15 minutes. Remove from the oven and let cool for 15 minutes.

In a medium bowl, using an electric hand mixer, beat the cream until thick, about 1 minute. Add the powdered sugar and continue to beat until the cream is very thick.

To assemble the pies: Place the pastry disks on a work surface. Divide the cooked apple slices among 4 of the disks. Dollop about 2 tablespoons of the cream on top of the apples and cover with the remaining disks.

Transfer the apple pies to dessert plates, dust with cinnamon and serve immediately.

- » It is more than just a scholarship; it is a new positive addition to this chapter of my life.
- » I used to overlook little things in my life like a home-cooked meal but now I realize how fortunate I am—I want to volunteer as much as possible. This program has helped me to become less close-minded and to realize that just a day of my life can help a family in need.
- » I especially appreciated working side-by-side with those I was serving and to see that someone who made it out of homelessness was then helping others.

And some who were being served also commented:

- » You blessed me, so I'm going to bless you.
- » Since you guys have been coming, people we have known for years are opening up and telling their stories.
- » Before you came, that lady would always say no. But, look, she takes from you every time.

- » They'll be crying when they realize you're gone. You don't realize how much they look forward to seeing you.

The seven students who started in the Fall semester of 2011 are all still enthusiastically with the program and eight students have joined them this Fall, 2012. The students are:

- » Class of 2014: Shannon Koch
- » Class of 2015: Adam Derouin, Amy Fox, Celine Florentino, Ciara Rosa, Marisa Rosario, James Wilkins
- » Class of 2016: Kevin Costello, Kathryn Dalton, Michelle Dela Paz, Anthony Gentile, Catherine Reiss, Ashley Schwiederek, Sean Shea, Joe Sinisi.

Program Director: Matthew Shields

Sisters of Charity Representative: Mary Lou McGrath, SC

Sister of Charity Leadership Team Representative:
Dominica Rocchio, SC ■

READER SURVEY

Dear VISION Reader:

Please assist us in evaluating VISION so that we may continue to provide you with a quality publication.

Thank you for taking the time to complete the questionnaire below. Please mail it to us in the envelope found between pages 8 and 9.

(Sisters and Associates are asked not to respond at this time; there will be another instrument designed to obtain your feedback.)

Elena Miranda
Director of External Communications
Sisters of Charity

1. How would you rate VISION in terms of the quality of the publication?

☐ Excellent
☐ Good
☐ Fair
☐ Poor
☐ Undecided

2. How would you rate VISION in terms of the timeliness of the material?

☐ Excellent
☐ Good
☐ Fair
☐ Poor
☐ Undecided

3. How would you rate VISION in terms of the content presented?

☐ Excellent
☐ Good
☐ Fair
☐ Poor
☐ Undecided

4. How would you rate the overall layout of VISION?

☐ Excellent
☐ Good
☐ Fair
☐ Poor
☐ Undecided

5. Do you usually skim VISION for articles of interest to you or do you read the entire issue?

☐ Skim for articles of interest
☐ Read the entire issue
☐ Varies

6. Do you share your copy of VISION with others?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Occasionally

7. To what degree has your knowledge of the Sisters of Charity and their ministries increased as a result of reading VISION?

☐ Very Much
☐ Somewhat
☐ Uncertain
☐ Not too much
☐ Not at all

8. How often have you visited the www.scny.org —website of the Sisters of Charity of New York?

☐ Very often
☐ Occasionally
☐ Never
☐ I don't use technology.

9. Please list any topic(s) of interest that you would like to see included in future publications of VISION.

Other comments...

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. We ask that you please respond by November 19th.

Sisters of Charity
of St. Vincent de Paul of New York
Sisters of Charity Center
6301 Riverdale Avenue
Bronx, NY 10471-1093
718.549.9200
Fax 718.884.3013
www.scny.org



SISTERS
of CHARITY
NEW YORK



Sr. Catherine Salani, DC, teacher at the John A. Coleman School of the ESPC, assisted the children in creating a thank-you card for the Sisters and staff at the SC Center.

Last summer the staff at the Sisters of Charity Center collected much-needed knee socks for the children at the Elizabeth Seton Pediatric Center. Members of the staff visited the center to deliver the socks on September 12, 2012. **Above** (left to right): Sharon Dosin, Ellen Downey, Anne Gray, and Sr. Regina Bechtle surround the sculpture created by Sr. Peggie Beaudette, SC. **Above right:** Sr. Regina presents socks to Lisa Poskanzer, ESPC Administrator.

The thank-you card was made official by the children of Class 1 with their thumb prints.



2012 GOLF OUTING ~ North Hempstead Country Club ~



Coming together on a beautiful day for fun and friendship in support of our ministries.

