

VISION

THE SISTERS OF CHARITY OF NEW YORK

Volume 16 • Issue 1 • Winter 2012

At the Threshold

by Sr. Mary E. Mc Cormick, SC



Every four years Sisters of Charity gather in Assembly to plot the course of their lives and ministries, and elect new leadership. The last issue of *Vision* (Summer 2011) provided brief biographies of the six Sisters elected to serve as President, Assistant, and Regional Coordinators/Councilors at the elections, held March 30–April 1, 2011.

The Assembly to set direction was held earlier, March 16–20, 2011, when 152 delegates and 18 collaborators met at the Westchester Marriott

Hotel, Tarrytown, NY.

The theme chosen for the Assembly— *At the Threshold: Igniting Charity Anew*— was the focal point of our daily reflections and prayer. On display were three “real” doors symbolizing the possible future thresholds we need to cross.

During the five-day meeting, proposals and recommendations from Focus Groups on Collaboration, Sponsorship, Outreach to Young Adults, Relationship with the Church, and Immigration/Poverty/Human Trafficking were presented and discussed. The unanimously endorsed Direction Statement that emerged from our deliberations on these topics will form the basis of how we will focus our energies and deepen our commitments during the coming four years.

Other matters discussed were the critical issues of mission, governance, vocations (both here and in Guatemala), finances, and property.

It is evident we are in a time of challenge and opportunity. How these important issues will be



Sr. Margaret O'Brien stands at the door chosen by an overwhelming majority— *Igniting Charity Anew*.

Sisters of Charity Archive Collection

decided will form future agendas for both council and Congregation meetings.

A key moment occurred when the delegates were asked to choose the door which would best take us— both individually and corporately— into our preferred future. The first would have us continue our Mission as we are currently living it; the second, intentionally passing the mission on to others; the third, creating a new vision. *By an overwhelming majority* the third door was chosen.

We, Sisters of Charity of New York and Associates, emerged from Assembly 2011 renewed in spirit, committed to making this a new time of charity.



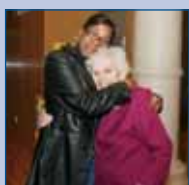
SISTERS
of CHARITY
NEW YORK

*Living Lives
of Love*



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Sr. Mary E. Mc Cormick, SC
Charism writings, retreats,
and spiritual direction
Boyle Hall





Letter from the President

Dear Sisters, Associates and Friends,

It is my honor and privilege to write to you as the 29th President of the Sisters of Charity of New York. I am deeply humbled by the trust and love shown to me by the members and I pray every day for God's blessings and guidance for the entire leadership team as we embark upon our shared journey to reveal the love of God through the ongoing mission of Jesus Christ.

At our Assembly in March 2011, we overwhelmingly chose to create a new vision, to *ignite the flame of charity anew*. What an exciting time to assume the role of President of this wonderful Congregation! Our tradition of loving service to the people of God is and always will be at the heart of everything we do. As we rededicate ourselves we ask for your prayers.

In this issue you will read about one of our sponsored ministries, Life Experience and Faith Sharing Association. As the former Director of Sponsorship Services, this ministry is near and dear to my heart. In the tradition of St. Vincent de Paul and under the guidance of Sr. Karen Helfenstein, the new Sponsorship Services Director, Sr. Dorothy Gallant and her hard-working staff continues to give hope to those without shelter, especially during the coming, frigid winter months. In the past few months, the LEFSA staff has welcomed hundreds for Thanksgiving and Christmas celebrations, giving many the opportunity to come together in prayer and thanksgiving for the small blessings in their lives. Being among people who have struggled so much and witnessing their faith and sincere gratitude for the smallest of gifts is a truly humbling experience. And oh how they love our Sr. Dorothy!

Our work, Sisters, Associates and friends, is never easy, but it always presents us with opportunities to grow in love and faith. With God's blessings and Saints Vincent, Louise and Elizabeth as our guides and mentors, together we will *ignite charity anew*. In the words of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, "Let us be courageous with love and zeal to fulfill the Will and order of Providence."

Sincerely in Christ,

Sr. Jane Iannucelli, SC
President

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



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Elena Miranda

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Article contributions to this publication are welcome, however, all submissions are subject to editorial and space constraints. See rear cover for our mailing address.



Golden Jubilarians Honored

The view from the Chapel of the Immaculate Conception porch is always magnificent, but on special occasions it seems even more so. September 10, 2011 was one of those days when the view was just spectacular. Sisters, Associates, family and friends of the Sisters of Charity of New York came together on this beautiful, late-summer day to honor and celebrate the six special women who embraced lives of love and service to God's people fifty years ago. When Sisters Helen Connors, Nora Cunningham, Jean Flannelly, Linda Giuli, Winifred Lyons, and JoAnn Schwarz joyfully processed into the chapel to celebrate the vowed life they embraced in 1961, the view inside the chapel was even more spectacular than it was outside.

Speaking on behalf of the six honorees, Sr Jean Flannelly spoke the following words:

"Fifty years and two days ago, we, the Golden Jubilarians crossed the threshold of the door on Mother's porch and entered a new world. We were to become Sisters of Charity to serve God's people. Having been attracted by what we had

seen from the outside, we now were ready to delve deeper into this mysterious life of sisters and the Sisters of Charity, in particular.

"We were women who came of age during the Camelot years and watched the burial of our king of Camelot, John F. Kennedy, after his assassination.

"We watched our Church open its doors and windows to welcome the presence of the Spirit calling us to newness of life, who witnessed a radical re-scripting in how we were to understand ourselves as women, as Catholic Christians, and as women religious. We were women who experienced the Vietnam war with its antiwar protests and peace movements.

"Through all of this we were called to change and to change often— not the core of who we are but the ways in which we understood ourselves, our relationships, our world, and our God.

"... We see now that our embracing the vows was not just for us in our deepening relationship with our God, although we may have thought of it that way fifty years ago. Our embrace of the vowed life

Group photo from left, seated: Srs. Linda Guili and JoAnn Schwarz; (standing) Srs. Helen Connors, Nora Cunningham, Jean Flannelly, and Winifred Lyons; (above top from left) Srs. JoAnn Schwarz, Winifred Lyons, and Nora Cunningham; (above bottom from left) Srs. Linda Giuli and Jean Flannelly; (below) Sr. Helen Connors



was our way of fanning the flames of love first ignited in our baptism so that we could be more fully available to carry out the mission of Jesus Christ."

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LEFSA: *Serving the Community for 25 Years*

by Sr. Margaret Donegan, SC

In September, 2011, Life Experience and Faith Sharing Association celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary. It was in the 1980's that Sr. Dorothy Gallant, SC, and Sr. Teresa Skehan, RSM, daily encountered the homeless and hungry on the crowded streets of New York City, and, like St. Vincent de Paul in 17th Century Paris, they were deeply troubled by the hopelessness and pain they witnessed, and again, like Vincent de Paul, they felt compelled to respond to the suffering and devastation that surrounded them. Thus was born LEFSA, a not-for-profit interdenominational empowerment association.

Over the years, the LEFSA team has reached out with compassion and respect to countless men and women, offering them food, clothing and shelter, while at the same time touching hearts that have often been broken by depression and despair. They have given encouragement and support to those who struggle to conquer addictions and to maintain sobriety, and they have



From left: Gerald, Sr. Dorothy, James Addison, David, and Frank Brandon all participated in the LEFSA Thanksgiving celebration.

walked with those who have trod the seemingly endless journey to retrieve the losses inflicted by homelessness.

The mission of LEFSA is to extend the reign of God. The team does this by striving to realize and respond to their call to live as sisters and brothers with one another, acting as responsible members of a global community. In addition, they make a discernible commitment to work for liberation with people who are oppressed, and they stand in solidarity with those who strive to create a more just society. LEFSA serves a multicultural, diverse population, and fosters and promotes Jesus' values of inclusiveness, love, solidarity, justice, and peace.

LEFSA, with its nine team members and two associate members,

extends its care to a clientele in Manhattan, the Bronx, and Brooklyn. Eight of the eleven members have experienced homelessness and have lived in shelters. Their experience that lends an authenticity to their work has proven to be invaluable.

Vaughn, a team member, who had been homeless, can relate to the hopelessness suffered by those who live on the street. He understands how the situation can lead to drug addiction, criminal behavior, and a never ending cycle of grief. Through his experience with LEFSA, he says, "I have met people who have regained a sense of dignity, hope, and personal responsibility even though the cards have been stacked against them. They have decided to stop self-destructing as a way of life."

Believing that all people have a right to a good quality of life, LEFSA provides weekly forums in shelters, drop-in centers, and an HIV/AIDS residence. There, brothers and sisters form a faith community. Following the Base Christian Community model, they reflect upon concrete life situations in the light of God's Word. They discuss with one another the issues and problems that may have contributed to their homelessness or hopelessness. They try to understand the forces that have influenced their lives, and in the light of scripture, they see these forces not as impersonal and unapproachable, but as factors to



Over 100 people joined Sr. Dorothy for a day of Thanksgiving.

The kitchen staff prepared the Thanksgiving meal for members and friends of LEFSA.

be understood and changed on personal, communal, and structural levels. Within this context of a faith community, together, they search for direction and solutions.

They soon find empowerment as they regain a sense of their value and dignity. By sharing with each other their wisdom and insights, and offering each other affirmation, support, and encouragement, they experience a new energy that can only come when a faith community works together on common problems. Through these gatherings, participants come to deepen their faith in God and to believe that life can get better. This new-found hope makes it possible for them to develop realistic and life-giving goals for themselves and to develop an awareness of how they can make life better for others.

Lucy, once homeless but now a team member, speaks of her experience in a faith community. She says, "In the beginning, being homeless was depressing. I was angry, ashamed, and upset being in that predicament. I had no relationship with God." One day, quite by accident, she walked in on a LEFSA gathering. The topic was love and it moved Lucy to think about God. In time she learned to focus on God and she put her life together. She says, "I am now living in my own apartment. ... I am a Deacon in my church and I am privileged to be with people in the shelters as a LEFSA team member."



Sr. Dorothy with Mervon Griffith, who was tutored by Deborah Byrd (right) for the naturalization test.

LEFSA is also involved in a weekly street ministry. In summer's heat and winter's frost, in the rain and in the snow, team members distribute sandwiches, juice, socks, and other items to people who live in the parks and terminals. They form relationships with the people and support their efforts to find housing.

In addition, each month LEFSA provides a leadership study program and members of the team meet with a women's empowerment group and a men's spiritual development group. These groups enjoy a good breakfast and dinner. LEFSA also offers two annual retreats at Mariandale Retreat Center in Ossining and distributes about 900 copies of *Daily Word* (an interdenominational book of prayer and inspiration) to people who are homeless or who were formerly homeless. LEFSA sponsors a weekly creative arts group and every year the team travels to Albany to advocate against unjust social policies.

Each of the programs that LEFSA sponsors has expanded in the past years. Now, many of the participants themselves are involved in facilitating sections of the program and in assuming other leadership roles. One participant, Deborah, who had been in a shelter visited by LEFSA every Thursday, was encouraged to tutor a young man. She believes the opportunity she had been given has been a blessing, and that LEFSA has opened doors for her.

Georgia, formerly homeless, says, "I am a story of hope because I was in the shelter when LEFSA came into my life. When it came time for me to move out, the organization offered me a ministry employment because of my understanding of homelessness."

The work of LEFSA has attracted students from Canisius College in Buffalo. Each year for one week, these students join the LEFSA team as they minister in the shelters and on the street.

Inspired by what they have experienced, the students return to Buffalo, where they minister in soup kitchens and other programs that reach out to the homeless.



Sr. Dorothy is warmly hugged by Diane Mack, who recently moved into a studio apartment.

For hundreds of people, LEFSA has been a beacon of hope. James, the Mission Coordinator who experienced homelessness says, "LEFSA helped me to dream again and heal" The team enabled him "to fly again."

LEFSA, funded entirely through grants and donations from organizations and concerned individuals, offers a variety of resources and referrals that facilitate the transition to permanent housing.

Because of such generosity, Sr. Dorothy has seen homeless men and women find faith, dignity, self-esteem, and the knowledge they need to make positive changes in their lives. "In my 25 years in LEFSA ministry, I have experienced many miracles."

Sr. Dorothy is continually inspired, humbled, challenged, and enriched by the resiliency and deep faith of the women, men, and children she has shared life with. "Journeying with people through homelessness has been a tremendous blessing in my life."

Sr. Margaret Donegan, SC
Educator, Archives Volunteer
Boyle Hall



Family, Friends, and Staff Gather to Celebrate Sister Anne Mary Regan's 100th Birthday

She has touched literally thousands of lives—students, staff, patients, and friends—with her kindness and good humor.

Michael Spicer, President and CEO
St. Vincent's Hospital Westchester

by Sr. Patricia McGowan, SC



Sr. Winifred Goddard (left) and Sr. Betty Kolb, RSHM, (center) at the St. Vincent's Hospital Westchester luncheon in honoring Sr. Anne Mary

When St. Vincent's Hospital of Westchester honored Sister Anne Mary Regan on November 3 they honored a woman who, since 1966 had been integral to its mission of "compassionate mental health services to all those in need."



Glenn Close joined well wishers in celebrating Sr. Anne Mary's 100th birthday at the St. Vincent's Hospital Westchester luncheon

Sr. Anne Mary Regan's quiet demeanor can be deceiving. She has never been an introvert and she is the first to admit that she is "very inquisitive and interested in many, many, many types of people and things."

As she celebrated her 100th birthday on November 4, Sr. Anne Mary acknowledged that this inquisitiveness is, perhaps, one of the secrets to her longevity.

Her 75 years as a Sister of Charity have been full ones. Her career spanned many areas: from nurse, to teacher, to assistant administrator, to switchboard operator, to supervisor of purchasing, to moderator of a Ladies Auxiliary. And all

of these positions basically were held at 2 of our community hospitals: St. Vincent Hospitals in NYC and in Harrison.

But this diversity began early in her life. As one of 11 children raised in Bridgeport, CT, she learned from her parents to be "open" to all types of people." It was back then that she became an avid Yankee fan, an ardent dancer and, most of all, she says, a "lover of people."

Her childhood was a happy, full one. Her father often took the children down to Yankee games, a tradition Sister Anne Mary continued until last year (imagine, 90 years as a Yankee fan!). She went to dancing school through high school and, later on in her life, young Sisters knew immediately who someone was talking



Yankees owner Hal Steinbrenner sent a letter to congratulate Sr. Anne Mary and thank her for the many years of dedication to the team

about if they heard a story about "the Sister who still does a 'mean' Charleston" at the drop of a hat. Even today she continues to give "a little skip" with her walker when the spirit moves her.

She admits that when she began at St. Vincent Nursing School in 1932 she

"never" thought of entering the convent; there was "so much to do and see" in the Big Apple. However, after making a novena at St. Francis Xavier Church in Manhattan a year after graduation, she decided to become a Sister of Charity.

Her nursing career began at St. Joseph Hospital in Yonkers. Then she went to St. Vincent's Hospital in Manhattan where she happily spent the next 26 years. During that time she witnessed many changes in the medical field and in herself, but she was always committed to the mission "of charity" that she witnessed in the other Sisters at the Hospital. From the emergency room to the operating room to pediatrics to various hall units, life was a series of "being ready, no matter what," something all of the nursing Sisters did, for multitasking was essential to their very beings.

On scholarship at Catholic University as part of a WWII Cadet Corps program, Sr. Anne Mary was trained to be supervisor of Nursing Services, in charge of all professional and non-professional staff at the hospital.

In 1966 Sr. Anne Mary was assigned to St. Vincent's Hospital in Harrison as Assistant Administrator to Sr. Regina Helen Chormley. Once again she assumed yet another series of clinical and administrative positions. Still, though she admits she "loved meeting so many new people," she still secretly "longed for the Village."

On her first Christmas Day in Harrison she recalls, she and two other



Sisters spent the day traveling to and from the New York hospital to get some needed supplies. By the time they arrived back at Harrison dinner was finished, a snowstorm had come in and Christmas was over. She has no problem admitting that she wondered if she had “made a mistake by coming all the way up to Harrison.” But that was a short lived thought and on that day, she says, she truly began her “most wonderful years” at that hospital.

Above left: Sr. Anne Mary with grandniece Patricia Ladko; **above center:** Sr. Anne with (from left) Sr. Irene Fugazy, Sandra Fugazy, John Fugazy and grandniece Daria Scanlon; **above right:** the staff at the Convent of Mary the Queen lovingly prepared Sr. Anne Mary's birthday dinner; **(from left, first row)** Gina Muñoz, Rosie Rodriguez, Sr. Anne Mary, Ana Guillen. Back row from left: Kevin Wasiczko, Melissa Perez, Billy Gonzalez, Octavia Edmonds and Clara Pino



In 1982, after a very full career she “retired.” But retirement simply became an opportunity to meet new people and

Chester, the Hospital dedicated a residential halfway house for women who had been addicted to drugs as the Sister Anne Mary Regan Residence. The dedication program for that day honored Sister “whose kindness, empathy and understanding continues to touch all of us at St. Vincent's Westchester.”

By the time Sister “truly” retired in 2009 and moved to our Convent of Mary



(Above from left) Sisters Helen Callahan, Irene Fugazy, Anne Mary, and Margaret McGovern all entered the Sisters of Charity together and celebrated their Diamond Jubilee in September 2011. **(photo right)** Singing lyrics specially written for Sr. Anne Mary are (standing from left) Associate April Boone, a visiting friend, Kevin Wasiczko, Sisters Betty Kolb, RSHM, Theresa O'Connor, Irene Breheny, Ellen Rose, and another visiting friend; (seated from left) Sisters Caroline McGinn and Kathleen Gilmartin.



During her years in Harrison Sr. Anne Mary was an essential part of the renewal and growth of the hospital. As part of her administrative duties she helped oversee the construction of new buildings and the establishment of new programs.

experience new things; she worked in Community Relations; she took over the supervision of purchasing at the hospital; for many years she was moderator of the Hospital's Ladies Auxiliary; and served as the Hospital historian.

Sr. Anne Mary also volunteered on weekends with methadone addicts at a heroin clinic in Port Chester, NY.

In 2008, on the site of the former Our Lady of Mercy Convent in Port

the Queen in Yonkers, she had left behind a veritable trove of quiet, joyful, loving service—a service she still continues daily.

There is no doubt she is a woman who has great reverence for all people. And, we join so many others in honoring her.

Ad multos annos, Sister!

Sr. Patricia McGowan, SC
Educator



Here are brief summaries of their ministries over the past five decades.

Sister Helen Connors, SC, formerly Sr. Rose Angela, has been a nurse for 46 years. At St. Joseph's Hospital in Yonkers she was an EKG technician, staff nurse, and primary/medical surgical nurse. Sr. Helen worked as a community health nurse with the Dominican Sisters Family Health Services, the Bronx, and with Cabrini Long Term Health Care Center, Dobbs Ferry. For more than 30 years Sr. Helen has been part of *Alien Band*, the contemporary church music group at Visitation Church, the Bronx.

Sister Nora Cunningham, SC, formerly Sr. Rita Marian, completed eight years on the leadership council last year. Her early years were spent teaching and then she served as pastoral associate at Our Lady of Victory Parish, the Bronx. Sr. Nora served the archdiocese as a pastoral minister, developing adult lay persons in leadership and ministry in three vicariates. She was a founding member of the South Bronx Pastoral Center. She also co-founded and co-directed the Center for Renewal and Education (CORE), whose purpose is faith development, ministry training, and lay leadership for service in rural parishes.

Sister Jean Flannelly, SC, formerly Sr. Leo Marie, is the new Executive Director for Mission at the College of Mount Saint Vincent, where she had been a psychology instructor. She is also beginning a community outreach program in Stanfordville, NY. Sr. Jean holds a doctorate in clinical psychology from Fordham University and was a psychological therapist at Misericordia Hospital in the Bronx. She has more than 40 years experience in lay ministry and has served five dioceses in seminary education and formation. Sr. Jean was also an adjunct professor at the Fordham University Graduate School of Religion and Religious Studies.

Sister Linda Giuli, SC, formerly Sr. Mary Therese, has been the Assistant Administrator at the Convent of Mary the Queen since 2009. Her early years were spent teaching before changing her ministry to nursing. She was a family nurse practitioner with the Westchester Health Department in New Rochelle and a nurse practitioner at the East Harlem Community Council, Manhattan. In the Bronx, Sr. Linda worked as a family nurse practitioner for 17 years at two Montefiore Hospital Health Centers. She also served as a nurse practitioner at St. Barnabas Hospital.

Sister Winifred Mary Lyons, SC, formerly Sr. Mary Walter, has been volunteering since 2008 as a pro-life educator, teaching leadership skills to elementary school students. She served as Assistant Superintendent of Schools for Pro-Life Activities in the archdiocese for 13 years. Prior to that she served the archdiocesan Department of Education as Assistant for Special Projects and as Pro-Life Coordinator for Schools. Sr. Winifred taught and was Assistant Principal at Sacred Heart, Dobbs Ferry, Principal at St. Mary's, Yonkers, and Our Lady Star of the Sea, Staten Island. She also taught at St. Peter's, Havestraw and St. Patrick's, Bedford Village.

Sister JoAnn Schwarz, SC, formerly Sr. Miriam Loreto, served the entire 46 years of her education ministry in the Diocese of Brooklyn. Thirty-eight of those years were spent at Our Lady of the Angelus in Rego Park, Queens, where she taught for seven years and was Parish Coordinator for 31 years. Her influence has been felt in all areas of the parish, including bereavement and catechetics.

The Golden Jubilarians have truly lived *lives of love* and the Sisters of Charity family was happy to celebrate them and their combined 300 years of service.

Sister Joy Pellegrino Celebrates Silver Jubilee

by Sr. Maryellen Blumlein, SC

Born and raised in Brooklyn, Sister Joy entered the Sisters of Charity in 1986. She professed first vows in 1989 and final vows in 1996. She has taught elementary school through college, been a guidance counselor and a school administrator.

Sister Joy holds undergraduate degrees in art and psychology and graduate degrees in secondary education, art therapy, and spirituality and spiritual direction. Sr. Joy presently serves as the Coordinator for Spirituality and Art Therapist at St. Vincent's Hospital in Harrison.



A talented artist, Sr. Joy enjoys integrating art and spirituality in both retreat and group work. From 2001 until 2007, Sr. Joy was the first director of the Bridge Building program, where she worked with high school and college girls, providing service opportunities and theological reflection for them. She also spearheaded the Charity in the City program, where college-aged students come together to experience some of the ministries of the Sisters of Charity during a two-week community living experience.

Sister Joy celebrated her Silver Jubilee on October 15, 2011. The Sisters of Charity are blessed by her many gifts and thank God for the gift of her vocation. Congratulations, Sister Joy!

Sr. Maryellen Blumlein, SC
Assistant Archivist
Boyle Hall



2011 Fall Jubilarians

The following Sisters celebrated jubilees in September 2011. Please visit our website under News/Recent Events to read about our Diamond Jubilarians. We congratulate and celebrate them.

75 Years

Sr. Miriam Helen Callahan, SC
Sr. M. Irene Fugazy, SC
Sr. Mary Margaret McGovern, SC
Sr. Anne Mary Regan, SC

70 Years

Sr. Rosemarie V. Bittermann, SC
Sr. Margaret Franks, SC
Sr. Marie Anne La Russo, SC
Sr. Elizabeth Mary O'Connor, SC

65 Years

Sr. Loretto Aphonse Clark, SC
Sr. Anne Miriam Connellan, SC
Sr. Dorothy B. Emanuel, SC
Sr. Helen P. Fleming, SC
Sr. Joan Glowacki, SC
Sr. Mary Elizabeth Kenny, SC
Sr. Mary Agnes McKeever, SC
Sr. Rosemary O'Donnell, SC
Sr. Regina O'Rourke, SC
Sr. Margaret Sweeney, SC
Sr. Miriam Gregory Yochum, SC

60 Years

Sr. E. Bernadete Brennan, SC
Sr. Elizabeth Mary Butler, SC
Sr. Trudé Collins, SC
Sr. Mary Jane Fitzgibbon, SC
Sr. Winifred Goddard, SC
Sr. Nora Hearty, SC
Sr. Grace Henke, SC
Sr. Mary Adele Henze, SC
Sr. Marie John Jimenez, SC
Sr. Kathleen McKiernan, SC
Sr. Helen McTaggart, SC
Sr. Mary Meyler, SC
Sr. Patricia Padden, SC
Sr. Francis Marita Sabara, SC
Sr. Catherine Sherry, SC
Sr. Barbara Srozenski, SC
Sr. Elizabeth A. Vermaelen, SC
Sr. Patricia Regina Walsh, SC
Sr. Maria Goretti Wieser, SC



Photo by Mary Jo Mersmann

SCNY Associates Collaborate with Federation Associates in Colorado Springs

by Peggy B Cekoric

On September 22, 2011, Associates and Sisters of four congregations in the Sisters of Charity Federation came together in Colorado Springs in what is hoped to be the first of many "state gatherings." Barbara Kennedy, Rose Meyler, Molly Stuart, and Peggy B Cekoric joined Associates and Sisters from New Jersey and Kentucky and were warmly welcomed by the Cincinnati Associates and Sisters from Denver, Colorado Springs, and Pueblo areas.



Photo by Mary Jo Mersmann

From left, Peggy B Cekoric, Molly Stuart, and Sr. Barbara Counts from Cincinnati

This enthusiastic gathering was the result of networking that took place at the Company of Charity Formation Personnel (CCFP) meeting in March 2011 in Nazareth, Kentucky. During break-out sessions, directors discussed the inherent problems of associates at a distance. Mary Jo Mersmann, Cincinnati Director of Associates, invited

Four New York Associates attended the gathering in Colorado Springs; (back row) Molly Stuart (on left), Barbara Kennedy (third from left), Rose Meyler (fifth from left), Peggy B. Cekoric (far right); Vie Thorgen, Nazareth and Leavenworth Associate (second from right), made her lifetime commitment during the gathering.

all Federation Associates living in the Colorado Springs area to this "family" gathering, which was held at Penrose-St. Francis Hospital.

Associate directors who planned this first "Charity Family State Gathering" originally hoped for ten to twenty participants and were amazed when the number reached thirty-two. Associates and Sisters who attended the meeting enjoyed camaraderie, good food, and good conversation. As an added bonus, an Associate of Nazareth, Kentucky, Vie Thorgren, read her "lifetime" commitment during the prayer service. It was an amazing bonding experience, resulting in stronger Charity Family ties! In the spirit of collaboration, Colorado Associates were invited to future local events sponsored by the Cincinnati area groups, which includes Elizabeth Seton's Feast Day, Thanksgiving Celebrations, and much more.

At the end of the gathering everyone exchanged contact information so that those living near each other can continue to gather for support, prayer, and fun!

CMSV Students Invite Sisters to Give Thanks Together

On Tuesday, November 15, 2011, the College of Mount Saint Vincent Offices of Student Activities and Campus Ministry hosted a Thanksgiving dinner at Pastorini Hall for the Sisters of Charity. Director of Student Activities Dwayne Jones, Stephanie Balentino, and Rilyn Pou joined Sr. Cecilia Harriendorf, SC, Fr. Chris Keenan, OFM, and Matt Shields from the Office of Campus Ministry, and 30 students in greeting the Sisters and guests, including college administrators and staff.



From left: Sr. Charlotte Rafferty, CMSV student Lyne Louis Charles, and Sr. Nancy McNamara sat together to enjoy a traditional Thanksgiving dinner at Pastorini Hall.

Over 60 Sisters were treated to an evening that featured dance and singing performances by Dolphin Dolls and Words (both student clubs headed by Joey Saldoriga), a challenging



From left: CMSV students Jaisymol Raju and Jillian May collaborate with Sr. Maria Iglesias (center) on answers for the trivia contest.

trivia game, and even a raffle. The students paid tribute to the Sisters as the founders of the College of Mount Saint Vincent and thanked them for their service and dedication throughout the years.

The Sisters in attendance were truly delighted to have this opportunity to share the evening and a wonderful meal with the students. On behalf of the Sisters of Charity, Sr. Helen McGovern thanked the students for all their hard work in creating an enjoyable evening.



Right: Sr. Teresita Duque was a lucky winner of the raffle. From left, CMSV students Rilyn Pou and Stephanie Valentino. To see more photos of this event, visit our website at www.scny.org

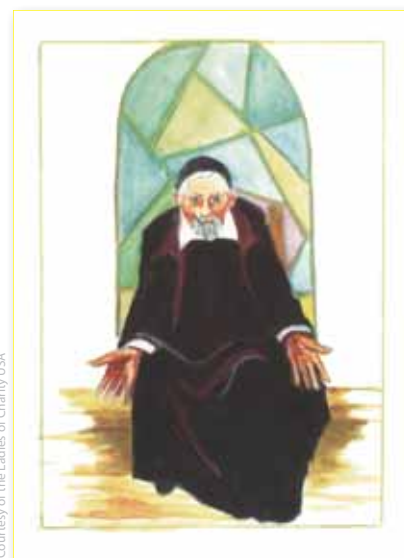
Eric Feldmann Celebrates Forty Years with the Sisters of Charity

Eric Feldmann began his career with the Sisters of Charity as Director of Community Relations at St. Vincent Hospital in Staten Island in 1971. Forty years later, Eric serves as Executive Director and CEO of the Sisters of Charity Housing Development Corporation, overseeing over 500 units of affordable housing sponsored by the Sisters of Charity in Staten Island, Manhattan and Rockland County.

The Sisters of Charity have been blessed by Eric's dedication and commitment to excellence throughout his career and we congratulate him on his 40th Anniversary.



Courtesy of the Ladies of Charity USA



Give me people of prayer and they will be capable of everything. They may say with the apostle, "I can do all things in the God who strengthens me."

St. Vincent de Paul

When St. Elizabeth Seton was asked to start a community of women religious she agreed, but cautioned that it could not interfere with her primary responsibility as the mother of five children.

Who were these children? What became of them? Their lives reveal something of the rich inheritance bequeathed them by their parents, not of wealth but of character and integrity.

This article will present Catherine Josephine Seton, William and Elizabeth's second youngest daughter, whose life spans almost the entire 19th century: 1800–1891. Her early life was filled with much loss and dislocation. She was three when her father died in Livorno, Italy, seven when she, along with her mother and siblings embraced the Roman Catholic faith, and nine when her mother relocated the family first to Baltimore and then to Emmitsburg, Maryland.

Catherine attended the Academy her mother began, eventually becoming a teacher of piano and music there. Elizabeth provided significant opportunities for Catherine to visit relatives and friends in New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore, for social and cultural purposes. Later, after her mother's death, she travelled extensively in countries abroad, at times in the company of her older brother William and his wife Emily. She met people from the highest ranks of society, including Lafayette of American Revolutionary War fame. Eventually she tired of the "novelty of Europe," and returned to New York City. Here, under the guidance of Bishop John Dubois, a good friend of her mother's, she engaged in many works of charity.

In 1842 Catherine visited Emmitsburg; it was her first time back since her mother's death in 1821. Perhaps it was here that the seeds of a religious vocation took root in her soul. A few years later, and back in New York, she was encouraged by Bishop John Hughes to apply for membership in the Sisters of Mercy, newly arrived from Dublin.

From her entrance into the community in 1846 until her death in 1891, Mother Catherine Seton was associated with many of the works of mercy undertaken by her community. She was best known, though, for her ministry to prisoners in the city prison known as the Tombs, on Blackwell's Island



Elizabeth's Children: Catherine Josephine Seton

by Sr. Mary E. Mc Cormick, SC

(Roosevelt Island today), and in Sing Sing.

With compassion, love, and zeal she attended to the needs of the incarcerated men and their families, spoke up on their behalf, and used her influence to have death sentences commuted. As she grew older, (she celebrated her Silver Jubilee at age 75) she became less involved in actual visiting, but continued to take an active role in the supervision of the work.

Shortly after her death (April 3, 1891) the *New York Catholic World* wrote of her, "No one probably ever acquired such influence and control over the thieves and robber class of New York. ... She was able to prevent much evil and inspire much good in [their] minds and hearts."

Elizabeth Seton, first American saint, would have been proud of her daughter, first New York Sister of Mercy, who spent the second half of her life doing incredible good for the poor and marginalized of Elizabeth's native city.

(Materials for this article taken from: *Catherine Josephine Seton and the New York*

Mercy Experience by Ann Miriam Gallagher, RSM, published in *Vincentian Heritage*, Number 1, 2007)



Nov. 1999 *US Catholic* – In an article on renaming saints' days to jazz them up a bit, here's how Brian Doyle describes January 4: "Feast of the Tough New York Lady Who Bore Five Children and Then Her Husband Died and Somehow She Managed to Bring Up the Children Alone and on the Side Founded Schools and Established a Religious Order as if She Didn't Have Enough to Do!"

IN MEMORIAM

Sr. Mary Ellen Brosnan, SC (formerly Sr. Mary Rose)

Entered: 1949 + Date of Death: 11/7/11 + Age: 84

"... myriads of Seton College students benefited from her dreams on behalf of education."



Sr. Mary Ellen's first ministry began at the Elizabeth Seton School, a boarding school at the time. The school underwent many exciting changes and challenges, eventually becoming Elizabeth Seton Junior College. Sr. Mary Ellen would assume the position of Academic Dean of the new college, which served many underprivileged young women.

She became President of the college and remained in that role until it merged with Iona College, at which time Sr. Mary Ellen served as Assistant to the President of Iona College.

In 1995 Cardinal O'Connor presented Sr. Mary Ellen the Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice Medal, a papal honor given for service to the Church and the Pope. Sr. Mary Ellen had a deep commitment to education and to the young women she served so well.

Sr. Anne Courtney, SC (formerly Sr. Anna Mercedes)

Entered: 1931 + Date of Death: 5/6/11 + Age: 96

"She believed that, 'God wants us to meet Him in everyone and be responsive to their needs.'"



Sr. Anne was an outstanding educator and taught at five schools over 52 years. During her 18 years at Cathedral High School, she both taught in and chaired the English Department; she was affectionately nicknamed SAM (Sr. Anna Mercedes) by her students.

Sr. Anne's longest association was with her alma mater, the College of Mount Saint Vincent. Over 23 years, she was an English instructor, Academic Dean, Associate Professor of English, Vice President, and Executive Vice President and Continuing Ed Coordinator. At age 70, Sr. Anne became the Archivist for the Congregation, and served that department well and with love for a total of 21 years.

Sr. Mary Ann Donovan, SC (formerly Sr. Christopher Mary)

Entered: 1956 + Date of Death: 10/9/11 + Age: 73

"She was a gentle woman, unafraid to be warm and loving and trusting."



Sr. Mary Ann earned several degrees in her two favorite areas of study, Mathematics and Religion. Her ministry in education spanned all three formal levels and outreach programs as well.

Sr. Mary Ann's interest in religious studies began at an early age when she learned the Psalms alongside her very dear Protestant neighbors and her later studies, especially at Drew University, helped her to believe in the importance of ecumenism.

Sr. Mary Ann loved life and she loved her work; her years at St. Barnabas High School, especially, helped her to understand even more "the God within each of us." Her laughter and sense of humor brought joy to many.

Sr. Margaret Mary Hindley, SC (formerly Sr. Grace Margaret)

Entered: 1949 + Date of Death: 8/3/11 + Age: 93

"Sr. Margaret's active life of ministry, prayer and community, as well as her later years of patient suffering, shaped her into something beautiful for her God."



A life-long educator, Sister taught on the elementary-school level for 18 years, served at St. Agatha's Home, and was assistant principal at Holy Name School for two years. After that, Sr. Margaret spent 12 years on the high-school level. She then served as Director of Grace Institute, her "dream job."

Gifted with an artistic bent, Sr. Margaret used her creativity to enrich the lives of others. She proudly made her sister's wedding dress and designed and made curtains for her local communities. She often enhanced parish and convent parties with her decorations and flair for color. As with all her ministries and endeavors, Sr. Margaret did them with great love.

Sr. Mary Rosalie Kaley, SC

Entered: 1937 + Date of Death: 10/30/11 + Age: 90

"Sister Rosalie always reflected the joy and enthusiasm of her God, whom she served faithfully as a Sister of Charity."



Sr. Rosalie filled at least a dozen positions in the Archdiocese for more than 60 years. During her first 25 years she was a teacher in primary grades, serving in all three New York dioceses. Recognizing her extraordinary gift of educating young children, the New York Archdiocese named her director of the Head Start Program. Other positions in the Archdiocese included Associate Superintendent of Schools, Associate Director of the 18th Synod, and Associate Director of the Office of Parish Councils. Sr. Rosalie also worked for the New York City Board of Education in its Non-Public Schools Follow-Through Program.

Sr. Rosalie served as Regional Coordinator from 1979 to 1983. During that period and beyond she served as part-time Communications Director. Through all of the experiences and people she met in her life, Sr. Rosalie always reflected the joy and enthusiasm of her God, whom she served ever faithfully.

Sr. Marion Kelly, SC (formerly Sr. Marian Ellen)

Entered: 1950 + Date of Death: 9/18/11 + Age: 81

"Many of the faculty sought Sr. Marion's advice as she was not only experienced but also kind and approachable."



Sr. Marion Kelly attended St. John the Evangelist School and Cathedral High School before entering the Congregation. A life-long educator, she spent her early ministry years teaching and then as principal for 14 years at Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary School in South Hampton. She would spend the rest of her ministry at Our Lady of Hope School as teacher and principal before retiring in 2008.

Over the years Sr. Marion helped fill a deep void for her niece and nephew, who lost their parents at a relatively young age. To her family, friends and those to whom she ministered, she was known as a woman of great love and compassion.

Sr. Maria Christopher Kurtz, SC

Entered: 1950 + Date of Death: 8/10/11 + Age: 87

"Sr. Christopher was a great nurse and mentor."



Evelyn Kurtz had the Sisters of Charity of New York as teachers at St. John the Evangelist School, Cathedral High School, and St. Vincent's Hospital School of Nursing before she entered the Congregation and took the religious name of Maria Christopher.

As Director of Nursing at St. Cabrini Nursing Home, Sr. Christopher planned, organized, administered and directed the nursing care for 200 skilled nursing patients. She supervised over 130 staff members, many of whom maintained contact with her throughout the years.

After her "retirement" in 1999, Sr. Christopher continued her lifetime care of the sick and elderly as a volunteer. During her recent years at Mary the Queen, Sr. Christopher continued to counsel and mentor the nursing staff on Hall 4. She was a great nurse!

Sr. Mary Christopher Ludden, SC

Entered: 1943 + Date of Death: 5/15/11 + Age: 90

"... she enters into the joy of her God whom she served faithfully for so many years."



Sr. Mary Christopher's (Joan) education ministry spanned three levels of schooling, from elementary to college. In addition to teaching the sciences and math, she taught home economics and retailing. At her alma mater, Hunter College, she chaired the home economics department for two of her 13 years there.

Outside the classroom, Sister was a member of a panel at Governor Rockefeller's Conference on Women, was on the Sisters' Council of the New York Archdiocese, and the Friends of Cardinal Newman Society.

In 1968 she was invited to the White House by Mrs. Lyndon Johnson as part of the that year's Women Doers Luncheon. In the early 1970s, she taught consumer education with the "Summer in the City" program. Sister also wrote articles for the *Journal of Home Economics* and prepared teacher's manuals in home economics.

In every ministry and honor received Sr. Mary Christopher served her God with joy as a Sister of Charity.

Sr. Miriam Agatha O'Dea, SC

Entered: 1938 + Date of Death: 5/6/11 + Age: 92

"Sr. Agatha was always available with a listening ear and open heart to each Sister's needs and stories."



Catherine O'Dea entered the Congregation after graduation from Cathedral High School. She was missioned to six schools over 50 years. Because of her administrative ability, Sister served as principal at St. Bernard in Manhattan and at Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary in Southampton. Sister's longest parish association was with Our Lady of Mercy in

Port Chester, where she taught for over 14 years, was a library volunteer and a vital part of the parish prayer group. In her retirement, Sr. Agatha was always available with a listening ear and open heart to each Sister's needs and stories.

Sr. Elizabeth Quinn, SC (formerly Sr. Marie Cornelius)

Entered: 1937 + Date of Death: 7/1/11 + Age: 93

"She had a large and understanding heart and a ready acceptance of all persons as she found them."



Sr. Elizabeth's ministry was education. After teaching first grade at three schools over 16 years, Sr. taught home economics at Bishop McDonnell High School for six years. Then she began her long service in adult education at Grace Institute. Sister's Congregational service included coordinator at the convent in Incarnation parish, Manhattan, and six years as part of the administrative team at Mary the Ocean Star in Ventnor, NJ.

Not surprisingly for one with her background, Sister was handy with a needle. In 2003, she entered two of her quilts — "Keep the Home Fires Burning" and "Stars in My Garden" — in an exhibit in NYC. Both of these quilts were beautiful examples of her work and the love which she put into each of her projects.

Sr. Regina de Lourdes Regan, SC

Entered: 1940 + Date of Death: 12/11/11 + Age: 89

"Wherever Sr. Regina ministered, she lived well our mission as Sisters of Charity 'to reveal God's love....'"



Sr. Regina's first mission assignments were to parish schools in Manhattan, where she taught grades 1 and 2. Up until the time of her death, students from 60-plus years ago enjoyed keeping in touch with her. Sr. Regina was later missioned to live at St. Vincent's Hospital, Staten Island, while studied Pharmacy at St. John's Pharmacy College. Sister Regina returned to teaching math and science at the high-school level until 1991 when she embraced a new challenge in her life as GED teacher at Grace Institute Outreach Program in Manhattan.

When Sr. Regina "retired" from teaching in 1997, she served as Pastoral Assistant at Resurrection Parish, Rye, where she visited the sick and elderly parishioners in their homes and nursing facilities, continuing her lifelong mission "to reveal God's love."

Please see page 14 for Sr. Frances Smith and Sr. Paula Marie Spaight.

The following were remembered at the 2011 Memorial Mass

Sisters of Charity

Sr. Marian June Byrne	Sr. Miriam Agatha O'Dea
Sr. Loretta Josepha Conran	Sr. Elizabeth Quinn
Sr. Anne Courtney	Sr. Maria Rohad Reed
Sr. Marian Joseph Craddock	Sr. Florence Mary Simpson
Sr. Yolanda DeMola	Sr. Mary Rosilda Tabacco
Sr. Eileen Mary Finnegan	Sr. Mary J. Walsh

Sr. Mary Gallagher

Sr. Margaret Mary Hindley

Sr. Cecilia Dolores Holmes

Sr. Marion Kelly

Sr. Maria Christopher Kurtz

Sr. Eileen Regina Leonard

Sr. Alice Luby

Sr. Mary Christopher Ludden

Associate

Helen Gunn

Former Members

Mary Driscoll Duffy

Barbara Knox Langan

Catherine Meaney

Please see page 14 for more photos and details

Sr. Frances Smith, SC (formerly Sr. Marguerite de Lourdes)

Entered: 1959 + Date of Death: 12/7/11 + Age: 77

"She was remembered ... as having 'a profound influence.' She was 'loved' then and continued to be loved by those she cared for as the years passed."



Sr. Frances Smith entered the Congregation seven years after graduating from Grace Institute, joining her twin sister, Margaret (Sr. Frances Maureen), who had entered the Community in 1952.

Sr. Frances's first mission was as a group mother at St. Joseph's Hall, Brooklyn. Here she made a lasting impression on all she met. She was remembered in a letter published in the *Tablet* on August 15, 2009 as having "a profound influence."

Her next mission was to St. Ignatius Loyola School, Manhattan in 1968, where she ministered as a teacher and then librarian until 2003 when she retired. In these positions she showed the same interest and love for her students and their parents as she showed at St. Joseph's.

Sr. Paula Marie Spaight, SC

Entered: 1947 + Date of Death: 12/3/11 + Age: 90

"... Sister Paula always showed a sensitivity of feeling for the concerns of others."



Sr. Paula's ministry in education began at St. Raymond's Elementary School in the Bronx and St. Agatha Home, Nanuet. After recognizing her great administrative abilities, Sister was assigned as principal of Our Lady of the Angelus School, Rego Park, in 1966. In 1970 she became the Sisters of Charity Supervisor of Schools. She also served as principal of Our Lady of Mercy School, Port Chester.

After a term as coordinator at Mount Saint Vincent Convent, she was elected to Community Leadership as Regional Coordinator. In 1983, she became librarian and religious education instructor at St. Patrick's, Mott Street, where she served until her retirement in 1991.

Through all of the experiences and people she met in her life, Sr. Paula always showed a sensitivity of feeling for the concerns of others.

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



Memorial Mass Honoring Deceased Sisters, Associate and Former Members Celebrated

On Sunday morning, November 6, the Sisters of Charity celebrated Mass at the Chapel of the Immaculate Conception at the College of Mount Saint Vincent to honor the Sisters, an Associate and former members who passed away during the past year. Father Christopher Keenan, O.F.M., D., Min., presided over the liturgy.

Sisters of Charity President, Sr. Jane Iannucelli, welcomed families, friends,

Sisters and Associates who came together on this beautiful morning to remember twenty Sisters, one Associate, and three former members. As the bell was tolled, a family member or close friend presented a photo of each deceased loved one, which was then placed on the side altar for the duration of the Mass.

A brunch reception followed the Mass, providing time for families, Sisters and

Associates to be together and share memories of their loved ones.

Top left: Sr. Jane Iannucelli greets a family member.

Top right: (from left) Srs. Florence Mallon, Genevieve Wetmore, and Margaret Murphy

Bottom left: (from left) Srs. Jane Iannucelli, Nancy Kellar and Anne Denise Brennan

Bottom right: John and Debi Kelly present photo of their aunt, Sr. Marion Kelly.

Visit www.scny.org to view all photos of the day.



Every year on the first Saturday in December we gather, Sisters and Associates, to recommit ourselves to live out personally and communally our call to make the charism of Charity alive in our world. Our presence to each other in commitment enables us to "stand strong together in a place of risk and promise . . ." aware that we call each other to conversion, to transformation . . .

And in that deep-down part of ourselves where contemplation leads us, each one of us knows that Charity can and will be ignited anew for a life-giving future only when each one is open and committed to the transformation necessary.

Sr. Eileen McGrory, SC



Vow & Commitment Renewal Mass

by Sr. Regina Bechtle, SC

"Do you remember the call?" sang Sisters and Associates at the December 3 Vow and Commitment Renewal Mass at Mount Saint Vincent. "Can you remember the vision, the dream, and the courage to love for life?"¹

Each year, Sisters of Charity of New York make an annual "devotional" renewal of the vows of poverty, celibate chastity, and obedience. Associates also renew their commitments to share with the Congregation in Jesus' mission, within their married or single lifestyles.

Two hundred Sisters and 15 Associates participated in the Eucharistic liturgy in the Mount's Chapel of the Immaculate Conception that day.

Earlier in the day, they began to unpack the 2011 Assembly's focus on "*Igniting Charity Anew*" by listening to a presentation and reflecting on moments of transformation and change in their personal and communal lives. They then chose one of eight "threshold groups," to shape a common response to the directions set by the Assembly. Groups

convened around collaboration; Creation's transformative energy; global poverty; human trafficking; immigration; new vision of religious life; relationship with Church; and young adults.

As threshold groups meet during the coming year, they will continue to draw on the shared energy of this December day of renewal and recommitment.

¹ ©1989 *In the Name of Love*, Jennifer Corlett, OSU.

Sr. Regina Bechtle, SC
Charism writings, retreats,
and spiritual direction
Boyle Hall



Visit www.scny.org to view all photos of the day.

What is the significance of December 8 for the Sisters of Charity?

The annual commitment renewal takes place on or near the Congregation's feast day, Mary's Immaculate Conception, December 8. On that date in 1846, the decision was made to begin an independent community of Sisters of Charity in New York. For many years thereafter, on December 8 community elections were held and Sisters renewed their vows (which were made annually until 1929).

If the Sisters make vows for life, why do they have to renew them?

We have the custom of making an annual "devotional" renewal of our vows. St. Vincent de Paul and St. Louise de Marillac gave their Daughters of Charity the practice of making vows each year, to distinguish them from cloistered nuns and thereby free them to give every service in their power to persons who were poor. But in 1917, revisions in the Church's canon law required all religious to pronounce perpetual vows. So since 1929 we Sisters of Charity have professed vows for life, according to our Constitution. Usually a period of living under "temporary" vows precedes this life commitment.

But making perpetual vows doesn't mean that we stop growing. It's always good to remind ourselves of the commitments we have made, and of the faithfulness of our God whose call first invited us to live a life of Love.



Sisters renew their vows (above) and Associates renew their commitments (below).



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SISTERS
of CHARITY
NEW YORK



The 2011 Sisters of Charity Golf Outing at the North Hempstead Country Club on October 6, 2011 was blessed with the support of our friends and benefactors, all who enjoyed a wonderful day of golf, gourmet food and warm friendship. Visit www.scny.org/donate to view all the photos.

