



SISTERS
of CHARITY
NEW YORK

Vision

VOLUME 10, ISSUE 4, Late Fall 2006

Golden Jubilarians Honored

by Chris Haggerty

Back in 1956 when 1st-class postage was 3¢, there were many significant developments. President Eisenhower won re-election. The Cold War was heating up. The Hungarian Revolution, the Suez Canal Crisis and the sinking of the *Andrea Doria* made headlines. "My Fair Lady" opened on Broadway. Grace Kelly married Prince Rainier. Elvis Presley hit the music charts. IBM developed the first hard disk drive. The DNA molecule was first photographed. There were summer and winter Olympic Games. The NY Yankees won the World Series and Don Larsen pitched a perfect game.

Another significant event took place in the Bronx on September 8th of that year – young women took first vows as Sisters of Charity of New York. Their circle was known as Immaculate Heart of Mary.

On September 9th of this year, 21 of these women celebrated their 50th anniversary in religious life with a liturgy and reception at Mount Saint Vincent, where they took their vows. To date, these Sisters have earned 55 degrees and 40 certifications in their fields. They have achieved much and touched many lives during their combined 1,050 years of service.

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The 2006 Golden Jubilarians pose for their formal portrait.

From left, in the front row: Sisters Constance Brennan, Mary Elizabeth Clancy, Mary T. Higgins, Anne Marie Falloon, Joan Marie Freer, Eileen Judge and Mary Ellen McGovern. In the middle row: Sisters Mary Ann Garisto, Mary Ellen O'Boyle, Dorothy Metz, Mary Kay Finneran, Mary Ann Donovan, Doris Pagano and Rose Ann Bianco. In the rear row: Sisters Carol Barnes, Margaret Egan, Patricia McGowan, Patricia Walsh, Helen McGovern, Eleanor Fitzgerald and Patricia Brennan.



Letter from the President

Dear Sisters, Associates and Friends,

As I united with 20 of my Sisters to celebrate the 50th anniversary of our entrance into the Sisters of Charity of New York, many memories flooded my mind and filled my spirit. Once we were praying and searching for answers about our vocation like the young women in Guatemala, whom you will read about in this issue of *Vision*. Now we are celebrating our Jubilee.

On September 8, 1956, we responded to God's call to be Sisters and over the years boldly embraced our mission to work "with and for all in need, especially the poor" (*SC Mission Statement*). The twofold love of God and others is at the heart of our vocation. Impelled by the love of Christ, we have faithfully accepted the challenges that life presented. We have endured sorrows, enjoyed many blessings and hopefully improved the lives of many. And so after 50 years of service, we joyfully welcomed the opportunity to publicly renew our vows. We offered our lives once more to God for an unknown future, relying on God's faithful love.

Jubilee is a time to celebrate and renew our efforts. May our Jubilee cause you to reflect on your life – past, present and future – and then, together, may we continue to make the Gospel values of Christ visible in our world.

Sincerely in Christ,

Sr. Dorothy Metz, 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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God Calls, People Respond: Vocations in Guatemala

by Sr. Anne Denise Brennan

Each of us is called into a unique relationship with God and to live it out in a particular manner of being and serving in the history of the universe. For some of us, our Baptism leads us into a dedicated single life and ministry in our world; for others, the call is to marriage; for yet others, the call is to commitment in religious life.

In the fall of 2005, six young women in Guatemala expressed a desire to explore such a commitment to religious life with the Sisters of Charity of New York. They had been praying and talking with Sisters Marie Immaculata Burke and Marie Tolle in our mission there. Sisters Mary Meyler and Virginia Searing are also on mission to Guatemala.



Four of the Guatemalan Aspirants with, from left, Sisters Mary Meyler, Immaculata Burke, Gloria DeArteaga, Anne Denise Brennan and Virginia Searing.

Sr. Dorothy Metz, President of our Congregation, and her Council accepted the request of these young women. They and their families were visited in January 2006 by Sr. Margaret O'Brien, Regional Coordinator for our Missions, Sr. Nora Cunningham, Liaison to the Council for Formation, and Sr. Gloria DeArteaga. Happily, Sr. Gloria, who is fluent in Spanish and is trained in Spirituality and Scripture, was available then for a new ministry.

During this visit, five of the original six women officially became Aspirante (Yearners), the term used in Guatemala for those known as Pre-Candidates here. After our NY-based Sisters returned here, Sr. Gloria was appointed Vocation Director for our Congregation in Guatemala. In that role, she will accompany these young women in a more formalized discernment of their call. A sign of blessing has been the request by the sixth woman of the original group to become an Aspirant – she was accepted in June!

In late August, Sr. Gloria returned to Guatemala. It was my privilege as Formation Director to accompany her to our mission in Solala and to participate in part of the program planned for the Aspirants.

Between January and August, the Aspirants took advantage of the excellent courses and resources for formation that are available there to strengthen their faith. Sr. Gloria will build on these experiences and develop our own program with the hope that some of these women will be ready to become Candidates or Postulants – as they are called in Central America – in January 2008.

This history of their call and response does not, however, give flesh and blood to the spirit, joy, and energy these young women bring to the journey.

At dinner that night at our Sisters' home in Lemoa, we were joined by the four young women and two neighboring Maryknoll Sisters. We all enjoyed an animated conversation about the customs surrounding specific holidays and holy days celebrated in Guatemala. As in all highly oral cultures, storytelling, combined with singing and dancing, are key elements in any gathering. Our anticipation of the birthday of Elizabeth Seton on August 28 added to the festivities. One woman sang a special welcome song in English for Sr. Gloria. All the women sang blessings on us in their first language, Quiche. They even had most of us doing a dance of the Mayan People!

God calls. People respond. May we all hear our respective calls and respond more deeply and enthusiastically to them. Let us pray for each other, especially for Sr. Gloria and her



The Guatemalan Aspirants serenade the Sisters in their native language, Quiche.

assistant Sr. Mary. Above all, let us pray for our Aspirants who desire to grow together in their love of God, in prayer and service, and to become who they are called to be as faith-filled women of the Church. ■

Sr. Ann Denise Brennan serves as Formation/ Novice Director for the Sisters of Charity of New York. She also leads poetry reflection groups with the area novices at the Religious Formation Conference Region 2 program as well as with senior Sisters in her own Congregation.

Honors and Happenings

Sr. Patricia McGowan, Ph.D. was honored at the May commencement ceremony at the College of Mount Saint Vincent (CMSV) with the Bene Merenti Medal. Sister is an Associate Professor of Communication specializing in Journalism, and advisor for all department internships. During her distinguished 25-year teaching career at the college, Sister chaired the Communications Department for 10 years. She also has served on many committees, such as Middle States Accreditation, and most CMSV committees, including Presidential Search. Sr. Patricia has served as Class Advisor, Yearbook Advisor and has received the College Teacher of the Year Award. If anyone deserves the Bene Merenti Medal, it is Sr. Patricia. "Well earned" indeed.



Sr. Margaret Egan led the effort that resulted in full accreditation for the teacher education programs and curriculum at the College of Mount Saint Vincent. The Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC) team who evaluated the college unanimously supported its application for accreditation in July 2006. Sr. Margaret directed the lengthy process that required years of preparation while she chaired the teacher Education Department at CMSV. Arlene Moliterno, Ph.D. who worked on the TEAC report, wrote that "the credit for achieving National Accreditation for the CMSV Teacher Education Programs belongs exclusively to Sr. Margaret Egan. She alone had built the foundations of an excellent undergraduate program. It was (her) consistent (and untiring) attention to detail that resulted in a positive outcome."

Sr. Dominica Rocchio was praised in the September 6th issue of *The Catholic Advocate*, the newspaper for the Archdiocese of Newark, by Br. Ralph Darmento, F.S.C., the Deputy Superintendent of Schools for that NJ Archdiocese. He praised Sister for her "heroic leadership" of the Archdiocesan schools for the past 14 years. He described how Sister "taught and witnessed from a heart and soul full of love and life" and lived the belief that "the Catholic school is at the heart of the Church." The laudatory article ends with, "Thank you, Sister Dominica, on behalf of your colleagues and the 104 elementary schools and 34 secondary schools, proud to be Catholic and determined not merely to survive but to thrive as we continue the mission."

Sr. Eleanor Fitzgerald's 17 years of service at St. Margaret of Cortona School in the Bronx were honored at the beginning of the new school year. September 28th was declared "Sister Eleanor Day" and she was feted with fun songs by children in grades K-4, performances by Irish step dancers, and a concert by pianist virtuoso Juan Lazaro, an 8th grader. Sister taught at the school for 15 years and has been volunteering there for the past two years.

Sr. Constance Brennan, who teaches in Visitation School, and **Sr. Margaret Donegan** of St. Raymond Academy, both in the Bronx, were recipients of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Compassionate Educator's Awards. The presentations took place at the annual Teacher's Institute at Cardinal Spellman H.S. on October 5th.

Sr. Connie was cited for her ability to help each child in her class feel good about her/himself and her willingness to share her years of experience with new teachers. As moderator, Sr. Connie has led the "News and Views Team" to win several ITV Eddy awards.

Sr. Margaret was praised for her reverent concern for all students, her recognition of the potential in each, and her daily incorporation of Catholic values. Her enthusiasm and professionalism in the teaching of English is outstanding.

Sr. Helen Wade is the Media Director at the Convent of the Sacred Heart in Greenwich, CT. She was very instrumental in creating the beautiful new library at the new Middle School. At the October 10th dedication of the new building, students and staff expressed their gratitude and admiration for Sr. Helen's creativity and dedication to learning.

Sr. Eileen Martin was honored for her 50 years of service to Catholic schools. The recognition came at the Rockville Centre Diocesan Teachers Conference on October 20th. Sister is the Administrator of Our Lady Queen of Apostles School in Center Moriches. She has served at this parochial school in Suffolk County, LI for 24 years.

Sr. Mary T. Boyle was honored on October 24th by St. Vincent's Hospital Manhattan (SVHM) with the St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Award. This annual honor is presented at St. Vincent's Angelus Awards Gala in recognition of the dedication and commitment of a Sister of Charity of New York to the mission of SVHM. Sr. Mary T. has served well as supervisor, teacher, and innovator at the hospital. She now volunteers in the Pastoral Care Department there.

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Edward Cardinal Egan of NY praised Sister in a letter in which he cited "...her many years of generous commitment to the Sisters of Charity and guidance to those in need."

Sisters of our Congregation established St. Vincent's Hospital on the feast of All Saints in November 1849.

Congratulations to Sr. Mary and happy anniversary to St. Vincent's on its 157 years of service.

Sisters Dorothy Metz, Jane Iannucelli and Margaret O'Brien represented the Sisters of Charity of New York at the Jubilee Assembly of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR). They joined over 800 leaders from across the country who gathered in Atlanta, GA in late August to discuss key religious life issues.

At the 4-day conference, leaders of religious orders based in New Orleans spoke of how their lives and works were severely damaged by the 2005 hurricanes and how they were challenged to find meaning during an experience of incomprehensible devastation. They noted that their grounding in faith and the sisterhood that exists among women religious are empowering them to recover, heal and continue in ministry.

In response to the hurricane devastation last year, our Congregation coordinated a fundraising effort that netted \$25,000 in less than five weeks. The monies were sent to Catholic organizations in the area, including the Daughters of Charity whose hospitals, convents and other ministries were damaged.

Sr. Maureen Dunn coordinated the reunion on September 13th for those who had been on mission in The Bahamas. Attendees enjoyed meeting old friends and looking through photos.

Through the years, our Sisters have opened six schools, a day nursery and three clinics in Nassau, plus another school on Harbour Island. In May 2001, the Bahamas Government with the Archdiocese of Nassau opened a safe haven for abused children and adults called Nazareth Centre. Sr. Joan Anderson has been the Centre's administrator since its inception.

Since October 1889, when five of our Sisters sailed down from New York to start our first mission outside the US, 218 of us have worked in The Bahamas for a total of 1,480 years of service!

If things are better in The Bahamas (as the slogan goes), we'd like to think that our Sisters had something to do with making it so.

The annual Broadway Blessing was held on September 18th at the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine in Manhattan. This non-denominational service of song, story and dance brings the theatre community together every fall to ask God's blessing on the new season. It is the brainchild of **Retta Blaney**, a SCNY Associate who is a journalist and author.

This year's event featured several numbers by the Broadway Blessing choir and the energetic Project Dance troupe. Among the individual performances were dramatic readings by Tony Award winners Edward Herrmann and Anna Manahan, the Irish theatrical star. Elizabeth Swados, the renowned author, musician, director, and composer, wrote a new song "Double Blessing" for this 10th anniversary staging.

Almost 400 people turned out for this year's Broadway Blessing, twice the usual attendance.

The Sisters of Charity of New York and four other religious organizations provided the financial support to make this event possible.

Sr. Carol Barnes laced up her walking shoes for the 5K Tunnel-to-Tower Run on September 24th. This annual event is in honor of off-duty NYC firefighter Stephen Siller who ran through the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel to join the rescue effort at the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001. He lost his life that day.

The \$215 in pledges that Sr. Carol raised will go towards Stephen's House, The Foundling facility in Stapleton, SI which is named after Siller. This will be a temporary home for children with profound emotional and behavioral problems who cannot be cared for by their families.

Sr. Carol's sister **Peggy Cekoric**, who is a SCNY Associate, also participated and raised \$150 in pledges.

Two Sisters of Charity Congregations – New York and Halifax – co-sponsored a forum on water ethics at Mount Saint Vincent on October 21st. The day-long event featured talks by John Grimm, Ph.D., co-founder and co-director of the Forum of Religion and Ecology at Harvard Divinity School and Sr. Suzanne Golas, csjp, who is the NGO (non-governmental organization) representative at the UN for her congregation, and the founder of Waterspirit, an ecology and spirituality ministry. Pop-jazz vocalist and activist Jen Chapin closed out the day with a concert. **Sr. Mary Ann Garisto**, SCNY and Sr. Mary Beth Moore, SC - Halifax organized the event. ■

Bridge Building Program Expands Its Scope

by Sr. Joy Pellegrino

As the Bridge Building Program gears up for a new year, plans are in motion to expand the scope of activities to include students who are now Bridge Building alumnae, specifically those who are now freshmen in college.

High school junior and senior level participants from St. Raymond Academy and St. Barnabas High School (both in the Bronx) will continue their monthly site visits to Sisters in their various ministries. College-age Bridge Builders are being invited to be part of the ongoing collaboration with the office of Campus Ministry at the College of Mount Saint Vincent (CMSV).

These activities include:

- preparing sandwiches for the Midnight Run to homeless in New York City
- attending an evening of reflection hosted by Sr. Cecilia Harriendorf at Weber House

- working with CMSV students on Habitat for Humanity projects
- participating in an Advent reflection that I host in the Office of Young Adult Ministry.

Recognizing the important relationship that exists between a young woman and her mom, a new experience called the *Mother-Daughter Twilight Supper and Reflection*, will be offered for the Bridge Building participants. These unique opportunities will provide time for sharing intergenerational wisdom, growing in greater appreciation of each other and praying together.

Other persons interested in attending the Mother-Daughter Twilight reflections may contact Sr. Joy at the Office of Young Adult Ministry at 718-543-5166. ■

Sr. Joy Pellegrino is the Director of Bridge Building, a program of faith formation designed to help high school students experience the spirit of charity through site visits and theological reflection sessions.

Informative Forum on Immigration

by Sr. Claire E. Regan

On Saturday, September 30th about 75 people – Sisters, Associates, and the general public – assembled at Visitation Church in the Bronx. They were there to hear an update on pending immigration legislation and to learn more about the steps to US citizenship.

The forum began with prayer on justice to “the stranger in your midst” from the three major traditions, Jewish, Christian, and Muslim. Then, Ms. Raluca Onciuiu, the Director of the Immigration and Refugee Services department of Catholic Charities Community Services for the Archdiocese of New York, described some of the reasons the Bishops are calling for reform in the current immigration system. They seek to eliminate:

- extended waiting periods for family reunification
- unfair labor practices
- unsafe working conditions
- onerous documentation requirements.

Next, Ms. Midori Hills, an attorney for The City University of New York’s Citizenship and Immigration Project, spoke about elements of current legislation that would make it a crime to assist undocumented immigrants. If local law enforcement

officers are required to aid the efforts of their Federal counterparts, the rights of many could be eroded. Many would be afraid to contact their local police if they were victims of crime or knew of criminal behavior in their neighborhoods.

Sr. Constance Kelly, SC works with Spanish-speaking immigrants in her pastoral ministry. She told of the hardships several people have faced here as they seek citizenship for themselves or try to bring a family member to safety in the US.

As the talks ended, action was taken. Those in attendance wrote out and signed cards to our two US Senators, Schumer and Clinton, asking them to support comprehensive immigration reform. The cards were collected and hand delivered to their New York City offices the following week.

The Sisters of Charity of New York stand united with our Catholic Bishops in calling for a reformed and more just system of assisting those who wish to immigrate to this country. ■

Sr. Claire E. Regan has been the Justice Effectiveness & Corporate Responsibility Coordinator for the Congregation for seven years. Before that, she spent many years working with the poor and homeless of East Harlem. Sister served on the Board of the NYC Coalition Against Hunger for five years and is a member of the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility.

Sr. Carol Barnes (Sr. William Regina) began her ministry in education. She taught on the elementary and high school levels, then joined the staff at the College of Mount Saint Vincent. During her ten year tenure, she was Chair of the Teacher Preparation program, the Asst. Dean of Students, and finally Director of Academic Advisement. After that, Sister was elected to the SCNY Council. Between 1987 and 1995, Sr. Carol served as President of the Congregation.

For the next nine years, Sister was Chairperson of the Board of Trustees at The New York Foundling. She currently directs Mission Effectiveness there.



Sr. Carol Barnes (1956) celebrates her day with Sr. Marie Liguori Leyer (1929).

Sr. Rose Ann Bianco (Sr. Angela Miriam) has devoted her career to health care. She was a nurse at two branches of St. Vincent's Hospital, then nursing supervisor at The Foundling. After that, Sr. Rose served as a child care worker and case aide at St. Agatha Home in Nanuet, NY. She then served as a social worker at Rockland Psychiatric Center in Orangeburg, NY for 20 years. Since 1993, Sister has done volunteer work, including at the Make-A-Wish Foundation.

Sr. Constance Brennan (Sr. Mary Josita) has devoted her entire ministry to education, as a teacher and a librarian. She taught for five years; then after earning her Masters in Library Science, served the next 21 years as a school librarian and audio/visual specialist. Sr. Constance returned to elementary school teaching in 1985, and has taught sixth grade and served as Director of Religious Education at Visitation School in the Bronx since 1992.

Sr. Patricia Brennan (Sr. Maureen Margaret) taught school for 16 years, then earned a MSW at Fordham. The next 12 years found Sister doing social work at The Foundling, at St. Augustine School, and at a day care center. That was followed by a decade in which she did social work at Fox House and counseling at The Grace Institute. Since 1999, Sr. Patricia has dedicated herself to helping those at Fox House, a family shelter in Manhattan.

Sr. Mary Clancy (Sr. Marie Elizabeth) has dedicated her ministry to schools. She taught elementary school for 20 years, then became a high school librarian/secretary. Since 1981, Sister has worked at St. Barnabas High School in the Bronx, serving in the guidance office and as audio/visual coordinator.

Sr. Mary Ann Donovan (Sr. Christopher Mary) taught in elementary schools in NYC and Yonkers in the early years of her ministry. After earning a master's degree in Catechetical Theology, Sister focused on teaching religious studies on the high school and college levels. She was on staff at St. Barnabas High School in the Bronx for 17 years and at Mount Saint Mary College in Newburgh, NY for 10 years. Since 2003, Sr. Mary Ann has been on the faculty for the Center for Renewal and Education for Orange and Sullivan Counties, NY.

Sr. Margaret Egan (Sr. James Carmel) has devoted her ministry to education. She began teaching elementary schools in the Bronx, Scarsdale and Yonkers. Then in 1971, she joined the staff at the College of Mount Saint Vincent where she chaired the teacher prep program, served as the Dean of Students, and became the Vice President for Student Development. Since 1988, Sr. Margaret has been the chair of the Education Department at CMSV. This past summer, she shepherded the college's teacher prep program to TEAC accreditation. (see p. 4)

Sr. Anne Marie Falloon (Sr. William Dolores) has dedicated herself to health care. She has served as a staff nurse/supervisor at St. Joseph's Hospital in Yonkers and at two branches of St. Vincent's Hospital. Sister also spent eight years as a nurse on mission in rural Kentucky. For ten years, she was a pastoral associate for special services at St. Joseph Parish in Bronxville. Sr. Anne Marie served her fellow Sisters for 14 years as Director of Nursing and/or Administrator at our two main retirement convents. She is currently a pastoral care volunteer at St. Joseph's Medical Center in Yonkers and at a local parish.

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Golden Jubilarians Honored ... *(continued from page 7)*

Sr. Mary Kay Finneran (Sr. Michael Maureen) taught elementary school for three years before becoming a nurse. She began her medical career at St. Vincent's Hospital. Sr. Mary Kay was a missionary nurse in Peru for five years, then spent 24 years working in hospitals and high schools in Atlanta, GA. She currently is the Administrator at the Convent of Mary the Queen, where she had been on the nursing staff earlier in her ministry.

Sr. Eleanor Fitzgerald (Sr. Mary Maurice) has specialized in elementary education. She taught for eight years at St. Joseph School in Yonkers, for 14 years at St. Mary's in Wappingers Falls, and for seven years at Sacred Heart in Hartsdale. Her most recent school posting was St. Margaret of Cortona in the Bronx, where she was on staff for 15 years. Sister still volunteers at St. Margaret's, which honored her contributions with "Sister Eleanor Day" on September 28th. Sister was also nominated for the Elizabeth Ann Seton Compassionate Educator Award this year.



Sr. Mary Ann Garisto (1956) and Sr. Mary Margaret McGovern (1936) enjoy a reunion with Dr. Mary Stuart, former president of the College of Mount Saint Vincent.



The golden-throated Jubilarians sing out during the liturgy.

Sr. Joan Marie Freer began her vowed life with the Religious Teachers Filippini in 1956. She pronounced perpetual vows as a Sister of Charity of New York on September 30, 1990. She holds degrees in English and has taught on the high school level: at St. Catherine Academy in the Bronx and La Salle Academy in Manhattan, at the Academy of St. Aloysius in Jersey City, at Archbishop Stepinac H.S. in White Plains and at St. Savior H.S. in Brooklyn. Sister currently teaches at a public school in NYC.

Sr. Mary Ann Garisto (Sr. Miriam Albert) has taught biology and/or religion at several high schools: 13 years at Cardinal Spellman in the Bronx, including six years as

chair of the Science Department; 15 years at Iona Prep in New Rochelle; 2 years at St. Joseph by the Sea on Staten Island. On the college level, Sr. Mary Ann was the Chair of the Science Department at Elizabeth Seton College in Yonkers. She taught biology for three years, then served as Director for Ecological/Global Concerns for eight years at the College of Mount Saint Vincent. She has held that position with her Congregation since 2005. Among her responsibilities is the overseeing of the Sisters Hill Farm in Dutchess County.

Sr. Mary T. Higgins (Sr. John Rosaire) has been a teacher, nurse, administrator and college professor. Her early ministries were as a teacher in elementary schools. She went into nursing in the mid 1980s and was on staff at St. Joseph's Medical Center in Yonkers. She has served as Administrator of the Congregation's retirement convents. She has been an Adjunct Professor of Nursing at the College of Mount Saint Vincent since 1993 and volunteers at the finance office at the Sisters of Charity Center.

Sr. Eileen Judge (Sr. Marietta Thomas) has earned degrees in history, nursing and community health. She taught elementary school in the first eight years of her ministry, and then switched to nursing. She spent eight years on mission in rural Kentucky and worked in Bayley Seton Hospital on Staten Island as a nurse practitioner for 15 years. Since 1998, Sr. Eileen has been on mission in Guatemala as a gerontology nurse practitioner.

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Sr. Helen McGovern (Sr. James Regina) has lived and worked in the Bronx for most of her life. The first 44 years of her ministry were devoted to schools – elementary through college – as both teacher and administrator. Her longest tenures were 14 years at St. Raymond School, first as a teacher, then as Assistant Principal; 12 years at St. Catherine Academy as guidance counselor; 9 years at the College of Mount Saint Vincent as Admissions Counselor and Director of Academic Advisement. For the past three years, she has served on the Council of the Congregation.



*Sr. Helen McGovern proclaims a reading during the Mass.
Sr. Mary Ann D'Antonio (rear left in photo) is part of the
Congregation's choir.*

Sr. M. Ellen McGovern (Sr. Maureen Ellen) taught for 13 years at elementary schools, then for 6 years at the College of Mount Saint Vincent. After that, Sister put her NYU-issued masters and Ph.D. degrees in Communications to good use at ITV, the Instructional Television service for the schools of the Archdiocese of New York. Since 1991, she has been Campus Director at The College of New Rochelle.

Sr. Patricia McGowan (Sr. Kathleen Mary) taught in elementary schools for 21 years. After earning a Ph.D. in

Journalism from NYU, she taught journalism at the College of Mount Saint Vincent. She chaired the Communication department at CMSV for nine years. Sr. Patricia still teaches at the Mount and is on the advisory board for this newsletter.

Sr. Dorothy Metz (Sr. Thomas Loretta) was an elementary school teacher for eight years. Then she served as principal, and taught, at St. Francis of Assisi in Mt. Kisco, NY. Sr. Dorothy returned to the Bronx where she taught at St. Gabriel's for 5 years. Then, she was on staff at St. Barnabas H.S. for 20 years, first as a Co-chair and teacher, then as Director of Development. In 1995, Sr. Dorothy became a Regional Coordinator for the Congregation. She has been the President of the Sisters of Charity of New York since 2003.

Sr. Mary Ellen O'Boyle (Sr. Catherine De Lourdes) taught grade school for six years and then business education at St. Barnabas H.S. for seven years. Then came a 28-year career at Grace Institute, starting as a teacher of business education and advancing to Administrator. That was followed by two years at the Intercommunity Center for Justice and Peace. For the past three years, Sr. Mary Ellen has served the Congregation as secretary to the President and Assistant President of the Congregation.

Sr. Doris Pagano (Sr. Christopher Marie) spent the first six years of her ministry teaching at elementary schools in Manhattan and in the Bronx. Then she was called to pastoral work. Sister served as Pastoral Minister in Guatemalan missions for 22 years, and as a Pastoral Assistant at Incarnation parish in Manhattan for 3 years. She was an Intern Chaplain at NYU Medical Center in New York. Sr. Doris has been a chaplain at Cabrini Center for Nursing Rehab in Manhattan since 1997.

Sr. Patricia Walsh (Sr. Daniel Maureen) began her ministry in education. She taught elementary schools in Manhattan and the Bronx for twelve years. For most of the 1970s, Sister was principal of St. Gabriel's in the Bronx. In the 1980s, Sister began working in healthcare administration. Since then, she has served as director of the Queens Daughters Day Care Center in Yonkers and as Assistant Administrator at two retirement convents for the Congregation. Sister has been a patient representative at St. Joseph's Medical Center in Yonkers for the past seven years. ■

Chris Haggerty is the Director of External Communications for the Congregation.

Other Anniversaries

Since this issue of Vision is largely about anniversaries, we thought we'd also tell you about these events.

LEFSA, Life Experience and Faith Sharing Association, celebrated its 20th anniversary on September 22nd. Sr. Dorothy Gallant co-founded this ministry with the late Sr. Teresa Skehan, RSM. LEFSA serves those who are now, or had been, homeless.

About 200 formerly homeless people celebrated the milestone in the school hall at St. Jean Baptiste in Manhattan. Many sang, read poetry and just expressed their gratitude to God, Sr. Dorothy and the LEFSA

team who had walked with them on their journey from shelter life. Bill Hurley, a SC Associate and the Congregation's Director of Development, attended the gathering and reported that, "It was a delight to talk with them, to listen to their testimony and to realize I was truly among the 'people of God'."

Since its founding, LEFSA has expanded from the two Sisters visiting 4 shelters, to 12 team members visiting 12 centers for the homeless.

This October marked the eighth anniversary of the debut of two significant displays.

The Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton Multimedia Traveling Museum was first seen by the public at the St. George Terminal of the Staten Island Ferry from October 22 through November 13, 1998.

As you may know, Staten Island holds a special place in the hearts of the Sisters of Charity of New York. Elizabeth Seton lived there for a while. Our Sisters launched their first mission on Staten Island in 1853, in New Brighton. They opened St. Mary's parochial school in 1912, St. Peter's in 1916, Blessed Sacrament in 1917, and St. Joseph's by the Sea in 1963.

Many people worked hard for five years to make the museum happen. Sr. Irene Fugazy, SC was the project's creator and director. When it's not on the road, the Museum's permanent home is the library at the College of Mount Saint Vincent. You can enjoy a virtual visit to it online at www.setonmuseum.org

The Sisters of Charity of New York Cross was dedicated and blessed on October 24, 1998. It represents the presence of the Sisters and their Associates at the place that has been their center since 1857 – Mount Saint Vincent. The cross stands dramatically on the road between The Villa, a residence for Sisters, and Le Gras Hall, the administrative center for the Congregation.

This nine foot, two-toned steel structure was designed by sculptor Sr. Margaret Beaudette, SC. The arc at the top of the cross reads "Sisters of Charity." The words in the bottom arc – "The Charity of Christ Impels Us" – are a quote from 2 Corinthians 5:14.

On May 5th of this year, two azalea bushes were planted at the base of the cross in memory of Sr. Bobbie Ford. That day marked the fifth anniversary of her murder while on mission in Guatemala.



The history books also remind us of these milestones.

November

- 1:** 1849, the Sisters of Charity of NY, a newly independent congregation, opened their first mission, St. Vincent's Hospital, in a rented house on East 13th Street in Manhattan.
- 19:** 1803, Elizabeth Seton, her ailing husband William and their eldest daughter Anna Maria, landed in Livorno (Leghorn), Italy after a six-week sea voyage and were quarantined.
- 26:** 1903, St. Vincent's Hospital on Staten Island opened.
- 29:** 1879, St. Vincent's Hospital in Westchester opened. It was the first Catholic hospital for the mentally ill in the NY area.

December

- 13:** 1859, the new Chapel of the Immaculate Conception is dedicated at Mount Saint Vincent
- 24:** 1822, Sr. Elizabeth Boyle arrived in New York to become superior of St. Patrick's Asylum, a role she fulfilled for all but one year until 1846.

27: 1803, William Magee Seton, Elizabeth Seton's husband, dies in Pisa, Italy.

31: 1846, first election of superiors of the newly formed Sisters of Charity of New York: Mother Elizabeth Boyle, Sisters M. Angela Hughes (Assistant Mother), Williamanna Hickey (Treasurer) and M. Jerome Ely (Procuratrix).

January

- 4:** 1821, Elizabeth Ann Bayley Seton dies. This is also her feast day.
- 25:** 1625, St. Vincent de Paul founds the Congregation of the Mission (Vincentians) for the evangelization of the poor and the formation of the clergy.
- 1794, Elizabeth Bayley marries William Magee Seton.

February

- 2:** 1857, Mother Angela Hughes takes formal possession of the Font Hill estate in Riverdale. The property is renamed Mount Saint Vincent.

Friendship and Faith Mark Visit to Italy

by Sr. Regina Bechtle

Just over 200 years ago, on November 18, 1803, a young family landed in the Italian port of Livorno (Leghorn), hoping that its healing sun would restore the husband to health. Those familiar with the story of Elizabeth Ann Seton know that God had other plans.

Quarantined in a dank “lazaretto” on arrival, Elizabeth watched and prayed as the condition of her beloved William worsened. He died in Pisa on December 27 and was buried in Leghorn. His business associates, the Filicchis, opened their hearts and homes to the distraught widow and child. Eight-year-old Anna Maria used to say, “How many friends God has provided for us..., for they are our friends before they know us.” The Filicchis introduced Elizabeth to the Catholic faith that they cherished – its ritual, beliefs, legacy of prayer and beauty. They began a dialogue of friendship and faith that led to her conversion and founding of the Sisters of Charity in the US, a dialogue that continued long after her lifetime.

Since 1993, my colleagues on the Seton Writings Project and I have spent many hours editing Elizabeth’s letters, journals and notebooks. This past June, her words came to life when I visited Italy as part of a group of Sisters of Charity of St. Elizabeth, their Associates and friends from Convent Station, NJ.

We landed in Pisa, where Sra. Francesca Quaratesi welcomed us into her home near the Leaning Tower. We listened in awe as she traced her ancestry back to her great-great-grandfather Antonio Filicchi. She was touched by our gift of Sr. Peggie Beaudette’s statue of Elizabeth, “Hazard Yet Forward.” A family friend, Prof. Franco Bassani, gave us a spontaneous tour. On the 15-mile drive to our waterfront hotel in Livorno, I could only imagine Elizabeth’s heavy heart as she accompanied her husband’s body along the same road.

The next day, we were shown around that historic city by Don Gino Franchi, founding pastor of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton parish in Livorno, and Mario Ceccarini, guide to so many Seton pilgrims through the years. We saw much that Elizabeth wrote about: the San Jacopo lazaretto, the Filicchi home where she stayed, the Church of Sta. Caterina where Amabilia brought her to Mass, the hilltop Marian shrine of Montenero where she had a powerful experience of the Eucharist and of the people’s faith.

In the peaceful garden of St. Elizabeth Seton parish, a statue of our patroness stands over the remains of her benefactor Antonio Filicchi and her husband. William’s body had been newly transferred from the deteriorating cemetery where it first was interred.

Inside the modern church, Don Gino proudly showed us the mural that traces Elizabeth’s Italian sojourn, and an authentic model of the *Shepherdess*, the ship that brought the Setons from New York. Don Gino, a scholar in his own right, has begun a Seton archive in the parish. Enthusiastic about spreading awareness of the saint, he and

(continued on page 13)



In Pisa, Sr. Regina and Don Franchi outside the home of Signora Francesca Quaratesi, the last living direct descendant of Antonio Filicchi, Elizabeth Seton’s friend and benefactor.

Congregation Plans for Assembly 2007

by Sr. Regina Bechtle

Here are the answers to some questions about Assembly that you may be asking yourself.

When and where will Assembly 2007 be held?

From February 16 to 22, 2007, we will travel over the river and through the woods to Xavier Center, Convent Station, NJ, on the grounds of the motherhouse of the Sisters of Charity of St. Elizabeth and the College of St. Elizabeth.

In a second session on April 28-29, 2007, delegates will meet at Mount St. Vincent to elect leaders for the Congregation (President and Regional Coordinators).

How many will attend?

There are 165 Sisters who are elected delegates, and 55 Sisters and Associates who are collaborative members. At some sessions we will be joined by lay colleagues in ministry and friends from other groups in the Vincentian and Charity families.

What does an Assembly do?

According to the Constitution of our Congregation, the major responsibilities of the Assembly include that of promoting renewal in light of our charism, sharing in the corporate process of setting direction, and electing the leadership of the Congregation.

As we prepare for and enter into Assembly 2007, we will:

- look at the events of the past few years and the ways we

(continued on page 13)



Former NY mayor Ed Koch was famous for his line: "How'm I doing?" Every four years we Sisters of Charity of New York, with our Associates and lay colleagues, take a collective time-out to ask and answer that question in our own way. Some congregations call this a "Chapter"; our term for it is an "Assembly."

The theme of Assembly 2007: "Meeting Our Grace," comes from the words of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton: "*We must be so careful to meet our grace.*" Where is God calling us now? How faithfully are we listening to that call? How are we

positioned, spiritually and organizationally, to fulfill our mission of revealing God's love to all in need, especially the poor? What do we want to celebrate together? For what do we want to ask forgiveness?

Assembly 2007 Prayer

Spirit of God, You are Life.
Breathe in us fresh ways of seeking and choosing
that we may join in Your great work
to see the world aright and our place in it.

Spirit of God, You are wisdom,
source of insight and truth;
help us to discern what is essential from what is not,
to use well what You place in our path
with courage and fidelity.
Hold us in the process of prayer and conversation
even when we have differences,
knowing that staying in the conversation
is a commitment to love.

Spirit of God, You are Love,
lifting up the fallen and healing the broken,
beckoning us to hope in a future we cannot see.
Free us to meet this moment of our grace,
so that Your love may inflame the world.
Make us conscious that we are not alone
but blessed with companions
both in heaven and on earth
who journey with us. Amen.

*Our Assembly 2007 prayer is adapted from the one
used by the Sisters of Charity - Halifax for their 2002
Chapter.*

Assembly 2007... (continued from page 12)

have tried to live lives of love, in response to the signs of the times

- hear updates on our ministries
- look at the witness of faith, hope and charity that we give
- have conversations about our hopes, dreams, realities and possibilities
- listen to what we are learning from the poor whom we serve, from the signs of our times, and from Earth, fragile yet resilient
- meet – in moments of shared prayer and worship in a special way – our God whose boundless Love we seek to reveal.

What outcomes do you expect?

The “Vision 2000” statement of Assembly 1995 named three directions which significantly focused our energies over the past decade: the poor, women and creation.

Enactments of Assembly 2003 called us in part to claim our heritage of Charity and to express it in new ways, and to enhance our capacity for mission by participating in decisions that impact our resources, by embracing greater simplicity of life, and by challenging consumerism. Assembly 2007 will no doubt invite us to go deeper into these directions and enactments that call for lifelong attention and effort.

We expect that the days of Assembly will be intense, meaningful, energizing, Spirit-filled, and yes, even fun! In it all, Elizabeth, our foundress, reminds us that all is gift, that God’s Providence surrounds us, that we will be given all that we need to *meet our grace*. ■

As Charism Resource Director, Sr Regina Bechtle researches, writes about, and offers retreats and programs on Charity spirituality, especially for groups in the Sisters of Charity Federation and the wider Vincentian family. She has co-edited a multi-volume collection of St.Elizabeth Seton’s writings.



THE ASSEMBLY 2007 LOGO was designed by **Sr. Margaret Beaudette**. She describes it as an **image of reaching out to embrace God in all things, breaking through barriers, from death to life, and ultimately bringing us to resurrection.**

Friendship and Faith... (continued from page 11)

his collaborator Lara Bellagotti have published an Italian translation of Elizabeth’s *Dear Remembrances* and her *Italian Journal*. He presented me with their latest work, *Un dialogo di amicizia e di fede* (A Dialogue of Friendship and Faith), a volume of letters between the Seton and Filicchi families, 1788-1890.

After an evening liturgy, parishioners hosted a dinner for us. Don Gino and tour guide Mario were delighted to receive their very own “Hazard Yet Forward” statues.

We left Livorno with unforgettable memories of people who truly embody the Filicchi’s openhearted hospitality, Elizabeth Seton’s magnetic charm, and the deep faith of both. ■



Sr. Regina in the living room of Sra. Quaretesi. Family friend Prof. Franco Bassanir graciously gave the US group a spontaneous tour. Original etchings of Antonio & Amabilia Filicchi are above the couch.



From left, Lara Bellagotti, Sr. Regina, Don Gino Franchi, and Mario Ceccarini with his copy of Sr. Peggie’s statue of St. Elizabeth.



Catholic Priesthood: Formation And Human Development

By Gerald D. Coleman, S.S. / © 2006, Liguori Publications / 141 pages in paperback

by Sr. Yolanda De Mola

Given the scandalous state of affairs evident during the past decade concerning clergy sexual abuse, the timing of this absorbing and excellent study serves as a sort of balm in Gilead. Clearly, hope is not dead.

Fr. Coleman is the vicar for priests of the Archdiocese of San Francisco and professor of theology. He has written extensively in the areas of moral and pastoral theology as well as all aspects of priestly formation. With fewer young men nationwide aspiring to become priests, this study is both practical and hopeful. Formation in general, sexuality and celibacy are subjects covered as down-to-earth issues facing the Church today. Seminarians, teachers, priests and laity will find here an absorbing, explicit study about the future of priesthood in the United States.

Since the publication of Pope John Paul II's encyclical *Pastores Dabo Vobis* in 1992, the fourfold formation – human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral – must be taken into account in ministerial programs. Sadly, one or more of these essential aspects of formation may have been insufficiently explored in the past. At this historical moment, however, such lacunae cannot and must not be tolerated if

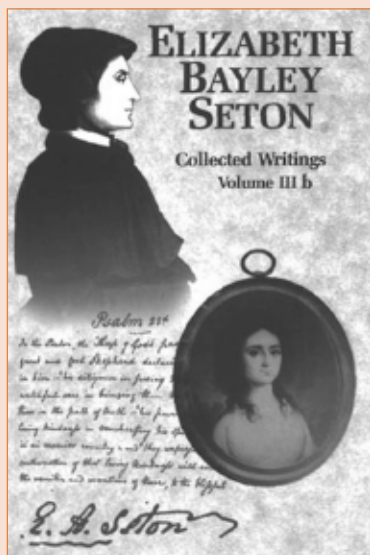
the Church is to produce mature, educated and holy priests. The promise a man ultimately makes to his bishop at ordination must infer he is able to live a peaceful, chaste and celibate life.

A study conducted in the *Los Angeles Times* recently showed that 91% of the 1,854 priests surveyed were satisfied with “the way their lives as priests are going these days.” When asked if they would do it over again, 90% said they would, and 95% professed “a personal relationship with Jesus that is maturing.” In light of the scandals of recent years, these realities make one hopeful of the future of the Catholic priesthood in America.

Finally, the author asserts, “All formation is ultimately self-formation.” The priest must grow in awareness that “the agent par excellence of his formation is the Holy Spirit who, by the gift of a new heart, conforms him to Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd.”

Clearly, this is serious business; it predicts what the Church will be like for the remainder of the 21st century and where it is headed further down the road. May none concerned fail. ■

Sr. Yolanda De Mola, who has taught school through the college level, is a writer and translator.



Save \$23 on the Set!

Now you can get the full collection of *Elizabeth Bayley Seton: Collected Writings* for \$180. That's a saving of over 11% on the price of buying the four-book set separately. These volumes contain Mother Seton's writings, plus prayers, meditations, notebooks, and other documents from the early Sisters of Charity community in 2,700 pages.

Sisters Regina Bechtle and Judith Metz (Sister of Charity of Cincinnati) collaborated as editors on this series. It can be ordered:

- online at vsi.depaul.edu/bookstore/art_elizabeth.html
- by calling the Vincentian Studies Institute at 773-325-7348

In Memoriam

Sr. Marjorie McCarthy • Educator • 8/25 /1915 - 7/30/2006

Marjorie McCarthy was born in Manhattan and raised in the Bronx. She was given the religious name Sr. Josephine Mary when she entered the Sisters of Charity of New York in 1939. She earned bachelor's and master's degrees in mathematics, which she taught on all levels, starting with fifth-graders at the Academy of Mount St. Vincent in the Bronx. Her special niche was with college-bound students, though. She taught for 18 years at her alma mater Cathedral H.S. in Manhattan. Then, she chaired the math department at York Catholic H.S. in York, PA for seven years. That was followed by four years as principal of St. Barnabas H.S. in the Bronx. Sister also was a computer specialist and was school coordinator for the Archdiocesan Computer Center in the 1970s. After that, she worked at the College of Mount St. Vincent – 12 years as the director of institutional research, followed by four years as a volunteer in the admissions office. Sr. Marjorie was an expert seamstress who frequently repaired vestments and designed dresses and suits. She was one of six children and is survived by her remaining sibling Sr. Ann McCarthy, O.P. of Newburgh, NY. Sr. Marjorie died in her 90th year. We are grateful for her 67 years of loving service.

Sr. Marie Trinita Flood • Educator • 12/20/1919 - 8/31/2006

Kathleen Flood was one of four children born in NYC to Irish immigrant parents. She entered the Congregation in 1939 and received the religious name Sr. Marie Trinita. Sister earned a bachelor's degree in History and a master's degree in Social Studies. She served as principal of Holy Name of Jesus School, Manhattan, and of St. Athanasius School, the Bronx. She taught at St. Joseph's and St. Patrick's Old Cathedral schools, both in Manhattan; at Visitation School in the Bronx; and at St. Gabriel's School in New Rochelle. After retiring from education in 1993, Sr. Trinita volunteered at Seton House for formerly homeless families in East Harlem. She was a receptionist and coordinated the shared food co-op program. On its 10th anniversary, Seton House honored Sister for "...her significant contribution to the quality of life for the families who reside there – especially for the children" whom she tutored and helped with their homework daily. She was noted for her compassion, selflessness, and sense of humor. She was a vital part of her convent at Our Lady of Mount Carmel in East Harlem, where she lived for many years. Sr. Trinita was 86 when she died. She had been a Sister of Charity of New York for 67 years.

Sr. Carmela Mary Egan • Educator • 4/18/1914 - 9/22/2006

Manhattan-born Kathleen Egan first began her association with the Sisters of Charity of New York as a student at Epiphany Elementary School and Cathedral High School. She entered the Congregation in 1931. Sister Carmela Mary, as she was known, earned first a bachelor's, then a master's degree in English. Her entire ministry was in elementary education where she taught almost every grade: at St. Joseph's School and St. Joseph Academy in Manhattan; Visitation in the Bronx; St. Joseph's in Yonkers; Our Lady of Mercy in Port Chester; St. Peter's in Poughkeepsie; St. Mary's in Wappingers Falls; St. Peter's in Yonkers; St. Francis of Assisi in Mount Kisco; and Resurrection School in Rye. At age 72, Sister began a six-year mission as a volunteer teacher at the Resource Center at St. Patrick's School in Bedford. She was always an incredible support to the administrators of the schools in which she served and staff relied upon her experience and wisdom. Sr. Carmela served faithfully for 75 years. She was 92 at the time of her death.

Sr. Dorothy Marie Herbert • Educator & Counselor • 8/8/1909 - 9/28/2006

Dorothy Marie Herbert was born and raised on the Rockaway peninsula in Queens, NY. Her mother's insistence on higher education brought her to the College of Mount Saint Vincent (CMSV) where she encountered the Sisters of Charity of New York as educators. She already had a family connection – her grand aunt was Sister Frances Anna, SC. Dorothy entered the Congregation in 1930. Her ministry in high school math education included ten years at St. Peter's on Staten Island, then 16 years at St. Gabriel's, New Rochelle. After earning her Master's degree in Guidance, Sr. Dorothy served as a guidance counselor. She found that her experience as a teacher helped her most in academic counseling. She encouraged and facilitated high school students' aspirations at St. Peter's (SI) and at St. Barnabas and Cardinal Spellman in the Bronx. Students found Sr. Dorothy to be calm, understanding, thorough and professional. In her retirement, she was a library volunteer at Cardinal Spellman and CMSV. In the final three of her 97 years, Sister's ministry was prayer, service and witness. She served faithfully as a Sister of Charity for 76 years.

SEASONALITIES

Calendar

Through February 28, 2007

An exhibition dedicated to artistic works by men and women religious will be on display at the National Museum of Catholic Art and History in New York City. The opening reception for the exhibit "Artistic Habits: Priests, Religious, and their Art" was on November 1st. This show features sculptures by Sr. Margaret Beaudette and Sr. Kathleen Aucoin. The museum is at 443 E. 115 Street in Manhattan.

If you can't get to this show, you can still sample the Sisters' works online at <http://www.depaulsculpturestudio.com/>

November

19: The profession of final vows by Sr. Mary Catherine Ryan.

December

2: Congregation Day, when Sisters of Charity of NY and Associates renew their vows and commitment.

January

1: The 160th anniversary of the formal establishment in 1847 of the Sisters of Charity of New York as an independent congregation.

4: The 185th anniversary of the death in 1821 of St. Elizabeth Ann Bayley Seton. Also, her feast day.

6: The 24th anniversary of the founding of Part of the Solution (POTS) in 1982. It began as a soup kitchen in a small storefront; now it's a multi-service organization operating out of two buildings. Sr. Jane Iannucelli was one of the three founders of what is now a central Bronx institution.

February

16: The 6-day-long Assembly 2007 convenes.

Reflection

As the Church year ends, we pray with Elizabeth Ann Seton in a spirit of thanksgiving and hope:

*"Every day of life more and more increases my gratitude to God for having made me what I am...
Hope always awake whispers Mercy for the future, as sure as the past."*



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