



SISTERS
of CHARITY
NEW YORK

Vision

VOLUME 10, ISSUE 3, Summer 2006

Celebrating the Life and Legacy of Sr. Barbara Ford

by Sr. Margaret O'Brien

Much can happen in five years. Memories may fade – or sharpen with each retelling. The significance of an individual may lessen – or deepen in the hearts that hold the legacy.

For the Sisters of Charity of New York who reflected on the life of Sister Barbara Ford during the fifth anniversary of her murder in Guatemala City, the surprise was in the immediacy and urgency of the memories and her significance for so many besides ourselves. In New York and at sites in Guatemala, those who had been touched personally by Sr. Bobbie, as she was affectionately known, or through the works she had begun, celebrated her fidelity to our Mission. Graces flowed as though from an abundant well.

In Guatemala

Seven Sisters from New York – Sheila Brosnan, Kathleen Byrnes, Mary Donagher, Arleen Ketchum, Dorothy Metz, Regina

Murphy and I – traveled to Guatemala to participate in the week of celebrations there. So did lay persons and missionary sisters from several other Congregations. They had worked with Bobbie during hard times, and many told us how she had been responsible for bringing them into the work – inviting, urging, and making connections for them. Her passion ignited theirs.



Our Sisters in Guatemala virtually earned licenses as tour operators. They made all the arrangements for a group of about 30 guests, including five young Mayan women who are aspirants of the Sisters of Charity of New York. We were transported to a series of remarkable events. A few highlights will give you the flavor of the happenings.

Traffic flowed around us on a busy street in Guatemala City, our first stop on leaving the airport. Eleven Sisters and friends circled the spot where carjackers tried to force Bobbie into her vehicle and shot her when she resisted. We prayed God's blessing on the country and people she loved.

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- Justice for Immigrants
- New Volume of Elizabeth Seton's Writings
- Inspirational Films
- Vocational Vocabulary



Letter from the President

Dear Sisters, Associates and Friends,

Six years ago I was in Guatemala visiting Sister Barbara Ford. We had entered the Sisters of Charity together and she welcomed this opportunity to give me an experience of what life was like for the indigenous Mayan people. I accompanied her to the remote mountain village of Sumalito, where she conducted a two-day workshop to help the people heal from the violence they and their families had experienced during the brutal years of war. A year later Sister Barbara was murdered. She came to Guatemala to bring peace and healing and ended up shedding her own blood.

On May 5, 2006 I was back in Guatemala to remember Bobbie on the 5th anniversary of her death. The priest who offered Mass for her in the Cathedral summarized her life so well: "...through her work she healed wounds of the heart, announced liberation to the poor, consoled those who cried, and thus returned joy, happiness and dignity to the people.... In Sister Barbara we are able to discover anew Jesus Christ, who comes to the one who is sick, excluded, poor.... Sister Barbara is a sign of the presence of God in our times. She walked looking with the eyes of God."

The Mayan people have a remarkable spirituality that impels them to forgive their enemies as Jesus did. They also have a long tradition of remembering and honoring their ancestors. I, too, experienced healing as I listened to their memories of Sister Barbara. They recounted events, large and small, of how she changed their lives by helping them to heal their wounds: their pain, their sadness, their bitterness, their hatred and their desire for revenge.

May we draw faith and inspiration from Sister Barbara's life so that we may draw closer to being able to say, "It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me." (Galatians 2:20).

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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**SISTERS
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Sr. Barbara Ford... *(continued from page 1)*

At liturgy in the Cathedral at Santa Cruz del Quiche, we heard Sr. Barbara eulogized and we carried in the offertory procession her personal items, treasures usually displayed in the chapel at her workplace in Caritas Quiché, the social and pastoral agency in the Diocese. Her ring with the “God is Charity” motto was held aloft by Sr. Dorothy Metz and, with a sense of awe, I held the bloodied collar of the shirt she wore the day of her death.



During the memorial Mass in the Cathedral, Ulrique, the German lay director of Caritas Quiché, presented Sister Bobbie's shirt with the Caritas logo.

Catholic and Mayan elements blended in a moving ritual of blessing for the land recently purchased to become the site of the future Sister Barbara Ford Center for Peace-Building. An open area on the hilltop was covered with pine needles, flower petals and colorful candles in the Mayan way. Earth from Mount St. Vincent was mixed with the native soil. We gathered around a fire and prayed at length that the Center would become a place of healing for those suffering the effects of civil war and for the nation itself. Incense carried our pleas to God, to the ancestors of the people, and to Bobbie, that donors and staff will emerge so that her vision will become a reality.

Mental health workers trained by Bobbie and her successors paid moving tribute to her work among them in several creative presentations. Two men, victims of the violence themselves, mimed the captivity of the people by silently tying up a third man and putting signs on his body proclaiming him a traitor and a communist. They themselves wore signs like “government” and “security minister.” Then a woman wearing a sign “Sister Barbara” untied the man. Following the mime each presenter spoke of his own suffering and of the importance of Sr. Barbara and the work of emotional and spiritual healing she started.

In three separate events, plaques dedicated to Sr. Barbara's memory were erected:

- A teaching and meeting place was blessed at Casa Nueva Vida, the only residential treatment center for alcoholics in Guatemala, which was started by our Sr. Mary Meyler at Bobbie's invitation.
- The entire city of Nahuala celebrated the completion of a water project and dedicated it to Sr. Barbara who had started the lengthy process some 20 years ago.
- In the garden of the Sisters' home in Lemoa, her co-workers erected a plaque in her honor.

“To me she was Eucharist,” said Fr. Dave Beranti in his homily at a beautiful liturgy in Novillero, where Bobbie began her Guatemalan ministry and where Sisters Marie Tolle and Immaculata Burke still serve. In moving simplicity he shared his memories of Bobbie's sense of mission and her total self-giving to the people, especially in their suffering. He told how she insisted that the pastoral team on which they both served stand with the people in spite of personal danger. Her leadership enabled the team to walk with the widows as they sought out the bodies of slain loved ones and helped to bury them.



The staff of Utz K'aslemal, the mental health organization that Bobbie started, conducted a multi-faith prayer service in the courtyard of the Maryknoll Sisters who live next door to our Sisters in Lemoa. Sr. Helen Werner, MM, (left above) lights candles for the Mayan portion of the service.

Following the homily, Fr. Dave incensed the picture of Sr. Barbara repeatedly and then turned to incense the young aspirants of the Sisters of Charity. He lingered over this blessing action, demonstrating without words the hope that these women will carry the legacy of Sr. Barbara Ford and our Sisters to build a new Guatemala.

(continued on page 4)

Sr. Barbara Ford... (continued from page 3)

Ceremonies in Guatemala



Eleven Sisters of Charity of New York gather around the just unveiled memorial to Sr. Bobbie at Lemoa. In front, Sisters Mary Meyler and Marie Tolle hold a photo of Sr. Bobbie. Standing behind them L-R, are Sisters Mary Donagher, Kathleen Byrnes, Virginia Searing, Regina Murphy, Margaret O'Brien, Dorothy Metz, Arleen Ketchum, Sheila Brosnan, and Immaculata Burke.



The five young Mayan aspirants pose with Monica Maher, an ethics professor at Union Theological Seminary.



Many were eager to help hang a banner at Casa Nueva Vida, where a new meeting kiosk funded by a grant from SCNY was inaugurated.

Sr. Barbara Ford Fifth Anniversary Novena Prayer

Blessed are You
Keeper of Word, Sun of Justice, Spirit of Truth,
for your promise
that mountains may move and hills shake but
Your love will never fail.

We thank You for manifesting that love
in the prayerful and prophetic life and ministry of
our Sister Barbara Ann Ford.

Inspired by her witness unto death
we ask you to pour out on us the graces of
courage and compassion
that we too may be faithful
to our covenant relationship with You,
sharing the bread of Your word and of our resources
that our earth and all who dwell on it
may be reconciled in peace, liberated from fear and
oppression.

Be in us both healing presence and voice for the
voiceless.

We ask this in humility, simplicity and charity.

Amen.



Casa Nueva Vida (House of New Life) is the mental health treatment center for alcoholics where Sr. Mary Meyler works.

Sr. Barbara Ford... *(continued from page 4)*

Ceremonies in the United States

Throughout the anniversary day of May 5th, Sisters gathered at each retirement house for a prayer of remembrance. In the evening, about 200 persons, including Sisters of Charity and Maryknoll Sisters, the Ford family, and the choir of St. Peter's Church in Yonkers, NY, gathered at Mount Saint Vincent. Near the SC Cross, Sisters Maureen Alexander and Mary Ann Garisto planted two azalea bushes using earth from Guatemala. Then the group proceeded to the plaza outside Le Gras Hall, the Administrative Center for the Congregation. There, a prayer service conducted in English and Spanish focused on the mission of Jesus – "I bring good news to the poor" – that Bobbie took so much to heart.

Sisters spoke of her life and mission. They blessed the four directions in the Mayan way, and heard excerpts from our Constitution matched to words from Bobbie's letters. As they milled about enjoying refreshments afterwards, many spoke of being touched anew by this quietly strong woman.

In both these celebrations, new memories were etched on our hearts; our passion for the Mission of Charity was enflamed again. Praise and gratitude continue to well up and overflow. ■

As a Regional Coordinator for the Sisters of Charity, Sr. Margaret O'Brien includes the Sisters in Guatemala among her areas of responsibility. She also works with the Retirement Houses' Administrators and the Boards of several nursing homes.

The Sisters of Charity of New York have been health care and catechetical workers at several sites in Guatemala since 1971. They went there in response to a call from Pope John XXIII who asked North American Catholics to share personnel and resources with Latin America.

Over the years, around 13 of our Sisters have served in the Guatemalan missions. In some small villages, we were the first resident religious (sister or priest) to serve there in over 100 years!



Sisters Helen McGovern and Jean Iannone were among the 23 who gave readings during the memorial service. Sr. Florence Speth is reflective at left.



Almost 200 people attended the New York observance in the plaza outside Le Gras Hall, the Congregation's Administrative Center at Mount St. Vincent.



Sister Anne O'Connell led the choir from nearby St. Peter's Church.

Justice Issue: Immigration

by Sr. Claire E. Regan

There is a stormy debate brewing in our country that will directly impact the lives of over ten million of our neighbors, friends, and co-workers and indirectly impact millions more. It's over the immigration issue.

This debate pits different policy issues against each other: the need to secure our borders in an age of terrorism vs. the need for a workforce of low-skilled or seasonal workers. Between these two poles lie gray areas that include the role of local law enforcement, information gathering by health care providers and schools, employment screening regulations and the militarization of our borders.

An estimated 34 million foreign borns live in the United States, including permanent and temporary residents and the undocumented. During the economic expansion of the 1990s, half of all new workers were foreign born. The US Department of Labor projects that by 2010 our country will have 27 million new jobs – nine million more than there will be workers available. This gap will increase after 2010 as “baby boomers” reach retirement age. Reform of our immigration laws will ultimately have to take into account that there are more jobs available for immigrants than there are legal visas for immigrant workers.

Employer regulations enacted after the 1996 Immigration Reform and Control Act made it more difficult for undocumented persons to get jobs legally. Many resorted to false ID papers, causing them to live further in the shadows of anonymity and fear of discovery. At the same time, green card holders petitioning for family members to join them in the US faced lowered quotas for their country of origin.

The processing of these family petitions takes years to be completed: 14 years for a spouse from Mexico and up to 20 years for a sibling from the Philippines, due to the low quotas for these countries. The 1996 law upgraded a host of misdemeanor violations to “aggravated felonies” punishable with imprisonment. For instance, jumping a turnstile becomes a theft of a government service. When such an incident comes up on the processing of an application for citizenship it can pose a barrier.

Caught amidst the complexities of quotas, visas, and employment rules are people struggling to make a living here while supporting family members overseas. People like

Charlie* who has been here for over six years. He was born in England and lived in Jamaica from where he immigrated, overstaying a visitor's visa. Over the years he has had to seek emergency medical aid for his diabetes, which led to the amputation of both legs. Now he lives in a city shelter. He doesn't have medical insurance. The advice city workers give him is to marry an American.

Then there's Harriet* from Barbados. She has lived here for 10 years and is married to an American citizen, yet she cannot get citizenship because her husband earns too little as a cook to support her.

The Bishops of the Americas have called for a fair and just immigration policy. They see the economic disparities that fuel the immigration to the United States and ask for more balanced trade, reduced agricultural supports and increased foreign aid as part of an overall immigration strategy. The dignity of the human person includes a right to work and to raise one's family. Our nation's greater economic resources impose a greater responsibility to see to the needs of our neighbor.

To learn more of the Bishop's campaign for immigrant rights, the following websites are recommended:

- www.immigrationforum.org
- www.networklobby.org/2006/immigration.htm
- www.justiceforimmigrants.org

In the months ahead, Congress will hold hearings about elements in proposed immigration legislation. However, this issue may languish in the pre-election period for political purposes, with politicians not wanting to take a stand one way or the other for fear of alienating voters in November. We must ask our elected officials to make their opinions and values known on this important topic during their campaigns this autumn. ■

* not real names

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.

189 Years of Working with Immigrants

by Chris Haggerty

Since coming here in 1817 to help poor immigrants, mostly from Ireland, the Sisters of Charity of New York have worked with immigrants and first generation Americans from many countries. In 2006, we're still working with newcomers to the NY metro area, but now, few of them have brogues.

The Sisters of Charity Multi-Service Center in Westchester (AKA Casa de Esperanza) focuses on helping those here less than one year. Sisters Jean Bocian and Terese McElroy direct operations at the Center; Sr. Mary Mc Cormick teaches there.

Most come to Casa to learn English. They also can acquire computer skills, prepare for citizenship, and get help dealing with schools, agencies and their confusing paperwork.

Casa is a modern-day version of the old one-room school-house: different levels of instruction and different subjects are covered at the same time in its two classrooms. In an average week, 90-100 adults and 30-40 children come there.

Now in its ninth year of operation, Casa has served immigrants from Latin America, the Middle East, Haiti and China – 29 countries in all! These are people looking for work, not welfare. They came to the US to escape poverty or persecution in their home countries.

Sr. Jean says: "We need to be with the new immigrants, and the Sisters of Charity of New York need to work with the poor and to change restrictive policies.... These are people of worth and dignity. They have status in our eyes, if not in those of government."

Casa is not the only place where our Sisters work with immigrants. Sr. Dorothy Gallant finds many new arrivals in the NYC Shelters she visits in connection with her Life Experience/Faith Sharing Association mission. Sr. Elizabeth Judge volunteers at both the Hope Community Center that serves the Latino population in New Rochelle, and at St. Jerome's parish in Brooklyn, where she helps the pastor with his work as director of the National Haitian Apostolate. Sr. Constance Kelly works with Spanish-speaking immigrants at St. Peter of Alcantara parish on Long Island. ■



In 1817, Mother Seton sent Sisters Elizabeth Boyle, Rose White and Cecilia O'Conway up from Maryland to care for orphans and serve the needs of an immigrant population in her native New York City. The three Sisters established St. Patrick's Asylum on Prince Street in lower Manhattan.

In 1847, Sr. Elizabeth, a confidant of Elizabeth Seton, became the first Mother General of the Sisters of Charity of New York.

This oil painting by Pietro Gagliardi of Rome, shows Mother Boyle welcoming two weary orphans as two already-established boys look on. The original work hangs in the boardroom in our Administrative Center at Le Gras Hall on the grounds of Mount St. Vincent. It was commissioned and presented to the Congregation in 1873 by John Kelly, a prominent NY politician who helped clean up Boss Tweed's Tammany Hall.

Kelly attended St. Patrick's School in the 1830s. He lost his wife and 3 children to tuberculosis, the disease that also claimed the lives of Mother Seton, her husband William and her daughter Anna.

Gagliardi was the foremost 19th century Roman Church artist. He also executed six huge oil paintings for St. Patrick's Cathedral.

Chris Haggerty is the Director of External Communications for the Congregation. She is a graduate of the College of Mount Saint Vincent.

Honors...

Accolades for Decades of Service

Sr. Teresa Kelly received a 40-year Service Award from the NY Foundling. Over the years, Sister served the Foundling in many capacities, including as Supervisor of its nursery program and Montessori school program. In 1974, she developed Blaine Hall, a residential program for older children which has grown and is held in highest regard by representatives of both NYC and NYS.

Sister works tirelessly to ensure the best plan for each child and thousands of them have felt her loving embrace over the years.

Sr. Janet Baxendale was honored at the June graduation of the Institute of Religious Studies at St. Joseph's Seminary in Yonkers, NY for her 30 years of teaching liturgy. A letter of appreciation from Cardinal Egan was read at the ceremony and Sister was surprised to learn that an award was being established in her name. It will be given to the best liturgy student each year.

Sr. Janet established the Institute of Religious Studies and also teaches at the seminary. She probably has taught most of the 600 students who have attended the Institute since its founding.

Sr. Gabriel Miriam Obraz was feted by the Federation of Catholic School Parents of Westchester and Putnam Counties for her 25 years of support and dedication to their organization. The May ceremony took place at the Westchester Broadway Theatre in Elmsford. Sister is the Administrator (AKA "the principal") at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School in Shrub Oak in northern Westchester County, where she has served for 39 years!

Sr. Dominica Rocchio was honored in May for her 14 years as Superintendent of Schools and Vicar for Education in the Archdiocese of Newark, NJ. Over 250 people gathered in West Orange to honor her.

Sr. Ellen Rose O'Connell celebrated 10 years as Executive Director of the North American Conference of Associates and Religious (NACAR). At the June NACAR conference, Sister was cited for her leadership in facilitating a partnership in mission between vowed religious and lay associates.

Sr. Eileen Storey, who died last December at age 80, was the subject of a wonderful tribute written by Sr. Anne Montgomery, RSCJ in the May 2006 issue of *The Catholic Worker* magazine.

Grants Received

The Nazareth Centre in the Bahamas was the recipient of the 2005 Kerzner International "Outstanding Community Service Award." This honor came with a \$20,000 donation to "recognize an organization that went above and beyond both in action and also in need." Sister Joan Anderson is the Administrator of Nazareth Centre which houses 41 at-risk children ranging from infants to 12-year olds.

Kerzner Intl. is a leading developer and operator of luxury resort hotels and gaming properties worldwide. Atlantis on Paradise Island in the Bahamas is their flagship property.

The Sisters of Charity Multi-Service Center (AKA Casa de Esperanza) in Yonkers was grateful to receive two grants totaling \$3,000 this summer. One from the Junior League of Bronxville enabled the Center to buy educational materials for the English as a Second Language program. Another from the Barat Foundation of the Convent of the Sacred Heart in Greenwich, CT provided art supplies and furniture for school age children in its summer program. Sisters Jean Bocian and Terese McElroy direct operations at Casa.



This tapestry was presented to Sr. Dorothy Metz during her May visit to Guatemala. It is the work of two of the young women considering religious vocations.

The central image represents a traditional Mayan ancestor figure. The text around it reads "A remembrance (sic) for the Sisters of Charity of New York. Presented to you by Florinda and Christina."

The 15x18" weaving now graces the Congregation's Board Room at Le Gras Hall.

...and Happenings



Sr. Nora Cunningham (in white jacket) holds a "Justice for Immigrants / a journey of hope" banner outside the federal building in Syracuse, NY.

Sisters in Action

Sisters Dorothy Metz, Margaret Brick, Margaret O'Brien and Nora Cunningham represented the Sisters of Charity of New York at the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) Region 2 gathering in late April. The Region 2 planning committee marked LCWR's golden jubilee by focusing on justice for immigrants.

During the three-day conference in Syracuse, NY, 80 sisters from member congregations engaged in public prayer and witness. They advocated changes in policies by displaying signs and banners outside the federal building. The Sisters delivered green postcards with messages about immigration legislation to the offices of NY's two senators, Hilary Clinton and Charles Schumer. The group then marched in silence to the Cathedral several blocks away for Mass where immigrants told about the difficulties they face.

LCWR is comprised of the leaders of congregations of Catholic women religious in the US. Its 1,000 members represent about 95% of the 75,000 women religious in this country.

Join the Good Fight

Sr. Claire Regan, the Justice Effectiveness & Corporate Responsibility Coordinator for the Sisters of Charity of New York, used email to mobilize action on anti-trafficking legislation in the NYS Senate and Assembly.

In June, senators in Albany passed bill 3914-b, which basically was written by the pro-prostitution lobby. That bill positioned prostitution as a form of labor, defined traffick-

ing very narrowly, did not address demand, and provided no services or defenses to victims. Despite assurances from Senate staffers that this wasn't the final product and the bill would get rewritten in conference, there's no guarantee that will happen.

Sr. Claire's emails recommended bill A1898-b which is sponsored by NYS Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz, whose district includes Mount Saint Vincent. This is a much stronger anti-trafficking measure which addresses all the important issues that 3914-b doesn't. Sister urged phone calls, letters and emails to State Senators Frank Padavan (who sponsored 3914-b), Joseph Bruno and Dale Volker, as well as to Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver.

More information on this issue is online at the NY State Anti-Trafficking Coalition website at www.stophumantraffickingny.org

Mark Your Calendars

On September 30th, **Sr. Claire Regan** will moderate a prayer and panel discussion on immigration at Mount Saint Vincent. This program will be open to the public, and attendees will learn about current legislative and legal issues and how to empower action on behalf of immigrants in light of Catholic social teaching. The panel will include a representative of the Justice for Immigrants Campaign of the US Catholic Bishops Conference, an immigration attorney, and an immigrant who will describe the issues and hurdles faced while seeking citizenship.

This day resulted from "Conversations with the SCNY Council" that Sisters conducted this past spring. Our Sisters wanted to know more about this issue and its impact upon immigrants – legal and illegal – that we serve.

Earthbound

In mid-July, **Sr. Mary Ann Garisto** attended the 2006 Sisters of Earth Conference in St. Paul, MN. While there, she visited a sustainable farm. That was a "busman's holiday" for Sister, who, as Director of Ecological/Global Concerns for the Congregation, manages our Sisters Hill Farm in central Dutchess County, NY. You can learn more about our organic, sustainable farm – which does not use illegal migrant workers – at www.sistershillfarm.org ■

**Next issue:
Sisters Celebrate
Golden Jubilees**

Still Part of the Family

by Sr. Mary Gallagher

It was a beautiful, clear April evening when 130 former members and Sisters gathered on the 35th floor of the Mutual of America building on Park Avenue. The views of the outside skyline were breathtaking. Inside could be heard the sounds of joy and excitement from women who had once shared life together in the Congregation. The event was a cocktail party and reception to celebrate our former members' generous donation of \$45,000 to the campaign for the renovation of Mount Saint Vincent Convent.

The cost of this gala event was underwritten by Thomas J. Moran, Chairman of the Board, President and CEO of Mutual of America. The fundraising project was initiated by Rita Conyers, a former member of the Congregation, who was an Executive Vice President at

Mutual of America. Rita assumed the responsibility and cost of sending invitations to former members.

Assisting Rita in organizing the event were her Vice Chairpersons, Mary Ann Jordan and Aileen Stockman. Other committee members included Maureen Lynaugh Connelly, Zeni Fox, Kathy Gleason, Ann C. Healey, Peggy Higgins, Peggy Mack, Betty Reid, Hope Ridder, Kathleen Skinner, Winnie Sweeney, and Joan Weiss.



The Sisters of Charity of New York are truly grateful to, and blessed by, these extended members of our Charity Family. ■

Sr. Mary Gallagher is the Director of the Associate Program.

The benefactors of the event: Rita Conyers and Thomas J. Moran

Need prayers?

Prayer is the special ministry of our retired Sisters.

If you'd like them to remember your intentions, just let us know.

See page 2 of this issue for our address and phone number.

You also can submit a request online at www.scny.org/contactUs.html

Whether you need prayers or not, we hope you'll remember us in yours.

Elizabeth Seton 
PEDIATRIC CENTER
Changing lives, one child at a time

On July 1st, the Elizabeth Seton Pediatric Center (ESPC) assumed responsibility for programs at the Children's Rehabilitation Center (CRC) in White Plains, NY. CRC includes a school, rehabilitation services and an outpatient clinic for special needs children; it has an additional site in Putnam County. The non-residential CRC program has outreach to over 3,000 families.

The Elizabeth Seton Pediatric Center is a unique 136-bed pediatrics and acute rehabilitation facility based at the NY Foundling Hospital in Manhattan, which the Sisters established in 1869. Sr. Kathleen Aucoin is Director of Pastoral Care at ESPC.

ESPC also was featured as the cover story in the summer issue of *Commerce*, the official magazine of the Commerce and Industry Association of New Jersey. ■

Honor Thy Fathers

During the last few years, the Sisters of Charity of New York have made an effort to reach out to the priests with whom we have ministered over the years. Our intention has been to celebrate their fidelity to their priestly ministry at a moment in history when our Church is being rocked by various scandals. While the perpetrators must be held accountable, we must at the same time reach out to the dedicated priests who continue to serve the people of God.

At our two past celebrations, which each drew about 160 priests, brothers and sisters, we joined together for an evening of prayer, conversation and supper. At our most

recent gathering in March 2006, we asked our guests to consider broadening the circle to include laity, especially young adults, so that we can continue to build our Church together. The suggestion was strongly affirmed.

The tentative theme for the next gathering is "Building the Church Together." A panel of speakers consisting of a theologian, a priest and a young adult will focus the evening with brief presentations on their hope for the Church, some of the challenges we face, and suggestions for ways to invite young adults into greater participation. Supper, conversation and prayer will follow. ■

At the spring Support Our Priests gathering, Sisters of Charity of New York Mary Kay Finneran, May Ann Daly and Regina Bechtle and Congregation of the Mission Fathers Bruce Krause, Frank Sacks, and Aidan Rooney enjoyed a Vincentian family mini-reunion.



Family Reunion

During the last four days in April, 14 representatives from the Sisters of Charity of New York joined over 125 members at the Vincentian Family Gathering East at Princeton, NJ. A total of 11 groups from the US and Canada were represented and found many new ways to network and collaborate in the shared mission of charity which traces its roots back to St. Vincent de Paul.

Sisters Mary Ann Daly and Mary Mc Cormick served on planning committees for the event. Sr. Mary and Sr. Joy Pellegrino presented at the "Trailblazer" sessions on

youth/young adult ministry, formation in the charism and advocacy for the poor. Sr. Regina Bechtle was a keynote speaker. Her address, "Going With God's Flow: The Charity of Christ Impels Us," is available online at www.famvin.org/en/downloads/Bechtle-GodFlow.doc.

In addition to those mentioned already, other SCNY participants included Sisters Kathleen Byrnes, Theresa Capria, Carol DeAngelo, Mary Kay Finneran, Vivienne Joyce, Florence Mallon, Claire Regan, and Sandra Trifiro, plus Associates Peggy Cekoric and Sandy Figueroa. ■

Great News for Charitable Giving

As we go to press, we have learned that after years of negotiations and promises, Congress has just passed legislation allowing tax free distribution of traditional or Roth Individual Retirement Account (IRA) assets to organizations that qualify for charitable deductions. Individuals must be at least 70½ years of age to donate. There is a \$100,000 limit per year, per individual. President Bush signed this provision into law on August 17th as part of the Pension Protection Act of 2006. This IRA provision applies to gifts completed by December 31, 2007. For additional information please call our Development Office at 718-549-2248. ■



1776

by David McCullough

© 2005, Simon & Schuster / 400 pages in hardcover

by Sr. Yolanda De Mola

You'd be hard put to find a more detailed study of the birth of a nation than this comprehensive account of the American Revolution. The many pages of bibliography listed at the end of the book demonstrate that McCullough, a most-gifted historian, ignored no detail of a long and grueling campaign.

The author exhaustively researched both English and American archives and details the absorbing experiences of American loyalists, British troops and Hessian mercenaries.

At the center of the drama stands the imposing figure of George Washington and two young American patriots: Nathaniel Greene, a Quaker promoted to general at age 33, and Henry Knox, a 25-year old bookseller whose feats of victory in the dead of winter merited the gratitude of the new nation.

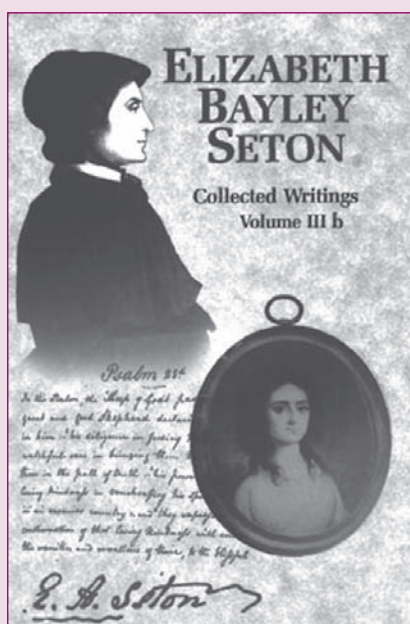
From the moment King George III went before parliament to declare America in rebellion, the story moves to the Siege of Boston, then to New York where British troops surface in unimaginable numbers. The Battle of Brooklyn

was the first between the Continental and British armies. It was the war's largest battle and could have been its last one, too. McCullough presents an unforgettable account of the daring escape of the American army. Washington's evacuation was to the Revolution, what Dunkirk was to the British 164 years later in World War II.

1776 shows how, in their darkest hours, the colonists manifest incredible bravery in the midst of cruel winters, made worse by shortages of food, clothing and other vital supplies. George Washington is depicted, not as the flawless leader of traditional histories, but rather, as an impressive officer who overcame his limitations and, with determination and struggle, led his nation to freedom.

This book, replete with countless descriptions of struggle and death caused both by the elements and the enemy, will leave you with a sense of appreciation and wonder. After becoming more fully aware of the costs of independence, you'll never again take for granted the nation we call our own. ■

Sr. Yolanda De Mola, who has taught school through the college level, is a writer and translator and serves as a lector and Eucharistic Minister in her parish. She also is a caregiver for her sister.



Just Published

Sisters Regina Bechtle and Judith Metz (Sister of Charity of Cincinnati) collaborated as editors on the just-published *Elizabeth Bayley Seton: Collected Writings, Volume III a & b*.

This completes the collection of Mother Seton's writings and includes prayers, meditations, notebooks, and other documents from the early Sisters of Charity community in over 1,300 pages. This two-tome set sells for \$95.

The series is published by New City Press and can be ordered:

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

Truly Moving Pictures

by Chris Haggerty

Every year, the American Film Institute (AFI) issues a top 100 list on some theme. In 2006, it was America's most inspiring films. Perhaps you saw the countdown on CBS TV this past June or read about this in the paper.

Even with 100 titles though, the list didn't seem complete. There were no films about the life of Jesus or any saints. And not one Bing Crosby as Fr. O'Malley title?!? ☺

So we asked the Sisters and lay staff here at the Sisters of Charity Center which films they would have named had they been asked. Here are the titles they came up with that the AFI panel missed.

Not surprisingly, true stories of people facing obstacles were suggested the most. Mel Gibson's 2004 film *The Passion of the Christ* and Franco Zeffirelli's 1977 TV mini-series *Jesus of Nazareth* were recommended. Among biographies, there's the 1947 French film *Monsieur Vincent* about St. Vincent de Paul and the 1980 American TV movie *A Time for Miracles* about St. Elizabeth Ann Seton.

Other suggested biographical dramas included *Becket* (Thomas Becket vs. King Henry II), *Brother Sun, Sister Moon*, (St. Francis of Assisi and St. Clare), *Entertaining Angels: The Dorothy Day Story*, *Good Night and Good Luck* (journalist Edward R. Murrow vs. Sen. Joseph McCarthy), *The Hiding Place* (Dutch sisters vs. the Nazis), *A Man for All Seasons* (Thomas More vs. King Henry VIII), *My Left Foot* (poor Irishman vs. cerebral palsy), *Romero*

(Archbishop Oscar Romero vs. tyrannical repression in El Salvador), *The Scarlet and the Black* (Fr. Hugh O'Flaherty of the Vatican vs. the Nazis), *Shadowlands* (English author C.S. Lewis) and *They Were Expendable* (American PT boat crews in WWII).

Fictional dramas such as *Babette's Feast*, *The Chosen*, *City of Joy*, *Crash*, *Jesus of Montreal*, *Mr. Holland's Opus*, *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, *The Mission*, *Radio*, *The Spitfire Grill* and *Steel Magnolias* made our list, too.

Comedies that made the cut included the live-action *Groundhog Day*, *Moonstruck*, and *Shirley Valentine*, plus the animated features *Brother Bear* and *The Prince of Egypt*.

The musical *Godspell* was suggested, and finally – in the all important Bing Crosby / Fr. O'Malley category – *Going My Way* and *The Bells of St. Mary's*.

You'll find more information about these movies online within the Internet Movie Database at www.imdb.com. The 100 titles in the AFI list are at www.afi.com.

Thanks to our panel who contributed titles to this project: Sisters Regina Bechtle, Anne Denise Brennan, Ann Citarella, Mary Ann Daly, Cecilia Harriendorf, Joy Pellegrino, Patricia Quinn, and SC Associate Patrice Athanasidy and staffer Marilyn Henning. ■

Chris Haggerty is the Director of External Communications for the Congregation. She is a graduate of the College of Mount Saint Vincent.

This fall at the College of Mount St. Vincent, which was founded by the Sisters of Charity, students can take advantage of the Video & Values series hosted by Sisters Cecilia Harriendorf and Theresa Capria in the office of Campus Ministry. The films that will be shown are all on either the AFI or this Vision list.

The Campus Ministry office serves students, faculty, staff and administrators of all faiths, as well as those of no particular faith. It also provides free popcorn at these Thursday evening gatherings.



The Mount is not just a place where movies are watched, it's also a place where movies – and TV shows – are filmed. For instance, TV's three *Law & Order* series are regulars there. The College also prepares students to work in film and video production and other communication careers.

What's in a Name?

by Sr. Ann Citarella

Our Church continues to change and update. There are aspects of our common religious experience that remain part of our tradition but are now named differently. For instance, over the years, the sacrament of Confession became known as Penance, then Reconciliation. The Holy Ghost became known as the Holy Spirit.

You may be familiar with the steps by which a woman becomes a Sister of Charity of New York. There is a learn-

ing process that allows both the interested woman and the Congregation to become familiar with each other. The mystery of God, active in someone's life, takes time. This process has distinct steps that mark a woman's growth in understanding and ability to answer a call to religious life. The names of some of these steps have changed but the intent – learning God's will and finding the best way to respond – is still the same.

These are the steps toward a life-long commitment as a Sister of Charity of New York.

Then	Now	Current Activity
Postulant	Candidate	Usually two years spent living with and learning about the Sisters of Charity of New York.
Novice 1st Year	Novice Canonical Year	A year of prayer, discernment, and attention to God's call.
Novice	Novice Apostolic Year	A second year of prayer about vocation with time learning about and involved in ministry.
Junior Professed	Temporary Professed	Commitment for a specific number of years living as a Sister of Charity, while continuing to understand her call to religious life.

Please pray for more courageous women to follow the many you have known who have answered God's call.

God, the source of creation and love, you invite each of us to serve you through the life which is your gift. May your grace encourage women to heights of holiness through service to the Church. Make me an instrument to encourage others to give of themselves and challenge me to do the same. Amen.

For more information about becoming a Sister of Charity of New York, contact Sr. Ann Citarella, our Vocation Director at 718-543-4898 or voccan@optonline.net. ■

Sr. Ann Citarella is Vocation Director for the Sisters of Charity of New York. In this ministry, she is in contact with women considering Religious Life as their response to God's call. Sister Ann collaborates with Vocation Directors from Federation, Archdiocesan, and National offices.

Happy Anniversary!

In the fall of 2005, two women professed vows as Sisters of Charity of New York. Both ceremonies took place in the Chapel of the Immaculate Conception at Mount Saint Vincent.

On September 18th, Sister Cecilia Harriendorf professed first vows. She explained "You don't come to a moment like this without the support of family and friends, and the Sisters of Charity, and a loving God who is never finished with us and who is constantly calling us to a new life." Sr. Ceil is the Director of Campus Ministry at the College of Mount Saint Vincent.

On October 15th, Sister Kathleen Aucoin professed final vows. When asked what had brought her to this point in her life, Sr. Katie said, "Love! Final vows are the external manifestation of what has been happening in me from the beginning. I have always been drawn to live the mission of Jesus in the vowed-consecrated life.... Charity will always live in the hearts of those whose lives we have touched!" Sr. Katie is the Director of Pastoral Care at the Elizabeth Seton Pediatric Center in Manhattan. ■

In Memoriam

Sr. Marian Catherine Muldoon • Nurse/Administrator • 10/1/17 – 3/11/06

This Pennsylvania native came to New York to attend St. Vincent's Hospital School of Nursing. She entered the Sisters of Charity in 1940. Sister served St. Vincent Medical Center for 45 years, starting as a nurse and ending as senior vice president, then serving as a patient representative. During her career, Sister was offered a 2-year residency program in Hospital Administration at Yale. The program's director wrote of her impact there: "...she immediately found her way into the hearts of all of us with her sincerity, selfless dedication, friendship for all, and excellent judgment." Sr. Catherine was 88 when she entered eternal life and had served as a Sister of Charity of New York for 66 years.

Sr. M. Thomasina Doran • Educator • 7/28/24 – 3/23/06

Sister Thomasina was born in Queens, NY and entered the Congregation in 1943. Her education ministry covered pre-school through high school. After teaching for 24 years at seven NYC parish schools, Sister joined Cathedral High School, Manhattan. She was on staff there for 19 years, first as a senior counselor, then as director of guidance. Her work with the students there was recognized by Marymount Manhattan with an Honorary Doctor of Laws degree. Sister then served as registrar at Grace Institute, Manhattan, for ten years. After that, she was a volunteer at Resurrection parish in Rye in the parenting program. Her meticulous nature was evident from the way she dressed to her classroom teaching. Her skills in record keeping were great assets in her professional roles. Sister died in her 81st year and in the 63rd year of her commitment as a Sister of Charity of New York.

Sr. Mary Ambrose O'Grady • Educator/Administrator • 7/15/09 – 6/21/06

Mary Frances O'Grady was born in Queens, NY but grew up in Brooklyn. She entered the Congregation in 1931 and received the name Sr. Mary Ambrose. She served in high schools for a total of 66 years: 36 years as a teacher, then 30 years in administrative capacities. Her early missions were in New York City: St. Barnabas (the Bronx), Cathedral and Blessed Sacrament (Manhattan), and St. Peter's (Staten Island). In the 1950s, Sister began a long tenure in Westchester County, first at St. John's in White Plains, then at the Academy of Resurrection in Rye. In 1962, she moved to New Rochelle, where she served for 23 years at St. Gabriel's, followed by 14 years at Blessed Sacrament. Sister worked on the consolidation of these two high schools and, in 1998, was inducted into their Hall of Fame for her 37 years of ministry. She decided to retire at age 90. Sr. Mary Ambrose was 96 at the time of her death. She had served faithfully as a Sister of Charity of New York for 75 years.

Sr. John Marie O'Toole • Educator/Administrator • 8/28/22 – 7/13/06

Mary Gertrude O'Toole was a Manhattanite who graduated from Our Lady of Good Counsel and Cathedral High School before entering the Congregation. She taught for 28 years at schools on the east side of the Hudson, then began 36 years of service and residence in Rockland County. Sr. John treasured her faith and was anxious to pass it on to others. Serving as Religious Coordinator for 16 years at St. Boniface in Monsey and for 7 years at St. Gregory in Harrison enabled her to do that. After that, Sister was a religion book consultant to a major publisher. Sr. John Marie was 83 years old when she died. We are grateful for her 65 years of loving service.

Sr. Alice Mary Fitzsimons • Educator/Administrator • 6/19/27 – 7/20/06

Alice Mary Fitzsimons was born and raised in Mount Vernon, NY. Two years after graduating from St. Barnabas High School in the Bronx, she entered the Congregation and took the religious name Sr. Josephine Mercedes. She began her 35-year teaching career in 1950, at Visitation in the Bronx. From 1956 to 1968, Sister was head mistress at St. Francis Xavier College in Nassau, the Bahamas, a position that brought out her true missionary qualities. Back in the US, Sr. Alice served as principal and teacher at St. Patrick's in Bedford Village, NY, then as Asst. Administrator at St. Augustine in the Bronx. In order to "stir up the desire for God" within people, Sister worked with LAMP Ministries (Lay Apostolic Ministries with the Poor). Sr. Alice Mary was 79 years old when she died and had been a Sister of Charity of New York for almost 59 years.

Seasonalities

Calendar

August

28: The 232nd anniversary of the birth of Elizabeth Ann Seton in New York City.

September

- 9:** Twenty-one of our Sisters will celebrate their Golden Jubilees in the Congregation with a liturgy and reception at Mount Saint Vincent.
- 13:** Reunion at the Convent of Mary the Queen in Yonkers of all who served in our Bahamian missions.
- 14:** The 31st anniversary of the canonization of Elizabeth Ann Seton.
- 27:** The 346th anniversary of the death of St. Vincent de Paul. He was canonized 77 years later by Pope Clement XII. In 1885, Pope Leo XIII named him patron to the Sisters of Charity.
- 30:** Workshop on immigration at Mount Saint Vincent.

October

21: With the Sisters of Charity - Halifax, we will co-host a Forum on Water – its availability, use, ethics, conserving, sharing – at Mount Saint Vincent.

November

5: We remember all our departed Sisters, family members and friends – especially those who entered eternal life over the past year – in our annual Memorial Mass at Mount Saint Vincent.

Reflection

At the liturgy of the feast of our foundress Elizabeth Ann Seton, the Church prays:

*"Lord God, You blessed St. Elizabeth Ann Seton with gifts of grace as wife and mother,
educator and foundress, so that she might spend her life in service to your people.*

Through her example and prayers may we learn to express our love for You in love for one another."

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