

# Vision

SISTERS  
of CHARITY  
NEW YORK

VOLUME 14, ISSUE 3, SUMMER 2010

## In this issue, we celebrate:

- Our Associates
- St. Vincent de Paul and St. Louise de Marillac
- Priests With Whom We've Worked
- Our Legacy at Two Schools
- Spirituality Programs



Photo by C.M. Haggerty

Associates and Sisters broke bread together as part of the annual Associate Commitment Ceremony. From the left, Associates Susan Porcelli and Mary Barrett Herbst with Sisters Carol Ann Ruf, Sheila Finucane and Edith Belmonte.

## Celebrating Our Associates

by Sr. Mary Gallagher, SC

One of the more special events on the Congregation's calendar is the Associate Commitment Ceremony. It is held annually in the Chapel of the Immaculate Conception at Mount Saint Vincent. This year, the Sisters of Charity welcomed five new Associates, including our first member from Guatemala where the Sisters of Charity of New York have served for over 40 years.

The day began in Smith Hall. Sr. Dorothy Metz, President of the Congregation, welcomed Sisters, Associates, family and friends. Sr. Mary Gallagher, Director of the SC Associate Relationship Program, gave introductory remarks. The opening prayer

was composed and led by Associate Peggy B. Cekoric. Sr. Maura Hobart, a Daughter of Charity, gave the keynote presentation on "Vincentian Spirituality and the Laity." The presentation was followed by a panel of Associate responders and time for additional comments from attendees.

All present then proceeded to the Chapel for the ceremony of Commitment where the Gospel account of the Annunciation was proclaimed by Associate Patricia Cooney Devaney. Associate Rose Meyler gave a reflection on the Gospel reading. Rose addressed the connection between Mary's calling in the Annunciation and the

*(continued on page 6)*



## Letter From the President

Dear Sisters, Associates and Friends,

Summer offers new opportunities for enjoyment and for looking at life through a different lens. Each season helps us to see God anew, but summer especially reveals to us Jesus who says, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not go around in darkness but will have the light of life.” (John 8:12). It is not God who changes, but rather we who change. The beauty of the flowers, the long days of sunlight, hopefully time for leisure – all help to illumine our minds and hearts and make us more present to God.

In May, I attended the Plenary Assembly of the International Union of Superiors General (UISG) in Rome, Italy. Eight hundred Major Superiors of Religious Congregations of women throughout the world attended the Assembly, which meets every three years.

Sr. Liliane Sweko, SNDdeN, from the Democratic Republic of Congo spoke on the theme “Called to Illuminate with Prophetic Light the World of Darkness.” The shadows and lights of African reality became the framework to remember the mystics and prophets of our time who continue to challenge us to become truly salt of the earth and light in the world today.

Sr. Liliane recalled the words of Ety Hillesum, a young Jewish women who died in the concentration camp: “I will help you, my God. I will not allow you to be put out within me; it is my turn to help you and to defend to the end your home in us.” Sr. Liliane went on to urge us to become involved in structures which make possible the building of a more just world.

She spoke of the many African women religious who have been assassinated during the past 50 years (235 in 2003) with many more since, along with their brothers and sisters, men religious, priests and laity. Realizing that, in the words of the prophet Isaiah, people walk in darkness or live in shadows in our world, she encouraged us to continue to be bearers of Christ’s light.

May we remember the words of Christ, “You are the light of the world,” (Matt.5:14) and consider looking for opportunities to bring the light of God’s love to those who live in shadows’ darkness.

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.



**SISTERS**  
of **CHARITY**  
**NEW YORK**

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

## Celebrating Our Priests

As the Year for Priest was coming to a close, the Congregation held its own celebration to honor the men of the cloth they've worked with over the years. On June 7, 65 priests joined 131 Sisters and SC Associates at Mount Saint Vincent for late afternoon Vespers followed by a sit-down dinner.

Sr. Helen McGovern chaired the planning committee for this event, which included Sisters Maryellen Blumlein, Theresa Capria, Jean Iannone, Eileen McGrory, Dominica Rocchio, and Patricia Walsh. It was a successful, delightful event. ■

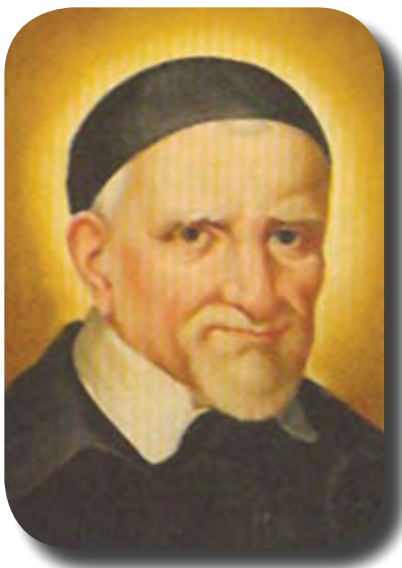


Among those at the Congregation's Celebration for Priests were (seated) Fr. George Nedumaruthumchalil, Sr. Elizabeth Butler, Fr. John P. Duffell and Sr. Anne O'Connell. Standing are Fr. John Monaghan, Sr. Patricia O'Brien, Fr. José Mena and Sr. Alice Darragh.

Photo by Sr. Jean Iannone, SC

## Celebrating 350 Years of Good Works

by Sr. Regina Bechtle, SC



What comes after 200? In Charity-based math, the answer is 350!

Last year marked the 200th anniversary of Mother Seton's founding of the Sisters of Charity. This year, we join the whole Vincentian family worldwide in honoring Saints Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac on the 350th anniversary of their deaths (1660).

In 17th century France, the creative compassion of these two close collaborators led them to start groups such as the Ladies of Charity, Daughters of Charity, and the Congregation of the Mission (Vincentians) as organized, continuing responses to the needs of

people who are poor. Elizabeth Seton took the Rule developed by Vincent and Louise as the inspiration for the American community she founded in 1809.

Today that Vincentian fire of Charity lives on in about 1 million people in 260 communities and associations in over 150 countries. To mark the 350th anniversary, read more about the mission and spirit of Vincent and Louise at <http://famvin.org/anniversary/en/reflection/official-documents>.

Join us in making a difference for "the poorest of the poor" by contributing to one or more microfinance projects in Haiti, co-sponsored by the Vincentian family; [www.zafen.org](http://www.zafen.org) (Zafèn means 'It's our business' in Haitian Creole.) ■



DePaul University has produced *Vincent de Paul: Charity's Saint* – a 1-hour DVD on the life and times of St. Vincent de Paul & St. Louise de Marillac. This visually stunning film features many experts and offers fresh

insights into Vincentian heritage during the 350th anniversary of Vincent and Louise. The CatholicTV Network will air this documentary on Vincent's feast day, September 27, and repeat it regularly.

# Rocky Mountain Highs – Of Charity

by Sr. Regina Bechtle, SC

Different paths led them to connect with the Sisters of Charity of New York; different journeys brought them to the western United States. Now as Associates of our Congregation, three women – Rose Meyler, Barbara Kennedy and Molly Stuart – continue the mission of Charity against the backdrop of the Rocky Mountains. For those back east who think that anything west of the Hudson River is practically foreign territory, they are a kind of NY Charity outpost in Colorado.



A mini Charity convocation in Colorado. From the left, Sr. Regina Bechtle, Barbara Kennedy and Rose Meyler.



Rose Meyler, a native New Yorker, worked for an insurance company and was transferred to Denver in 1988 where she enjoyed working for four years before her transfer back to Connecticut. It was during this time she became interested in centering prayer, a popular method of contemplative prayer or Christian meditation that places a strong emphasis on interior silence. She took courses at the Contemplative Outreach program affiliated with Rev. Thomas Keating, a Trappist monk and noted spiritual guide.

After retirement in 1996, Rose became a member of the Contemplative Outreach volunteer staff in Denver. There she teaches a nine-month course in contemplative practices for more advanced practitioners. Through her presence and her teaching, she helps people to deepen relationship with God by integrating prayer and action and creating a contemplative lifestyle in the midst of

their daily activities.

Rose is an experienced teacher of “welcoming prayer,” which is a way of choosing to respond instead of reacting to the stimulus of the present moment. By noticing feelings, emotions, and thoughts stored in the body, welcoming them and then actively letting them go, one is gradually freed from the burden of inner hurts and wounds that one may be carrying. (More information at [www.contemplativeoutreach.org](http://www.contemplativeoutreach.org))

During the years when her sister (and Sister of Charity) Mary ministered to the Mayan people in Quiché, Guatemala, Rose visited her there several times. She has been a source of support during Mary’s recent struggles with cancer.

At the March 2010 Associate Commitment day at Mount Saint Vincent, Rose gave a reflection on the theme “Saint Luke’s Account of the Annunciation.” She touched hearts and left many wanting to hear more from this gifted SCNY Associate and woman of the Spirit. You can read Rose’s reflection on our web site at [www.scny.org/recentevents.html](http://www.scny.org/recentevents.html); scroll down to find the March 27, 2010 notation about the Commitment Ceremony.



Barbara Kennedy (known to family and friends as Bunny) counts both the New Jersey and New York Sisters of Charity among her teachers. After graduating from St. Elizabeth’s Academy, Convent Station, NJ, Barbara attended the College of Mount Saint Vincent where she first met our congregation.

Bunny taught in high school and college and spent a number of years with the YMCA where she developed health and wellness programs and worked in administration. She’s a lover of nature and enjoys hiking, exploring and photographing what she sees in her travels. Her photos of birds, flowers, and landscapes have won numerous awards. Her snapshot of milkweed seeds was featured recently on the SCNY website.

A visitor is not long in Bunny’s presence before



Photo by Mary Stuart



Molly Stuart's home in the Rockies is 9,500 feet above sea level, offering stunning vistas of the surrounding mountains and high plains. Her house includes an apartment that serves retreatants and guests as an ideal hermitage space for prayer and reflection.

hearing about her parish, Queen of Peace church in Aurora, CO, and its active outreach to the materially poor. Twenty-four years ago, the parish founded a hospitality center called Friends of St. Andrew, which could be considered a western counterpart to POTS (Part of the Solution), one of our sponsored ministries here in the Bronx. St. Andrew's is totally volunteer-operated, except for its full-time director. For the past five years, Bunny has served as the soft-spoken, well-organized coordinator of the Monday team of volunteers.

She first got involved with this ministry when a parishioner asked her to help with a Christmas gift stocking program and her participation gradually expanded. She says simply, "It was a find in my life to realize there were so many poor people around." By being a practical friend to those in need, Bunny truly extends the "affective and effective love" that St. Vincent de Paul encouraged his followers to practice.



Mary (Molly) Stuart didn't know much about the Sisters of Charity until she was appointed to serve as President of the College of Mount Saint Vincent in 1992. It was a significant transition, for Molly was the first laywoman to head the College, following after such revered leaders as Sisters Catharine

Marie O'Brien, Mary David Barry and Doris Smith.

During her tenure as President, Molly became a SCNY Associate. She did much to foster a sense of community and mission and to instill a sense of the spirit and legacy of the Sisters of Charity.

In 2000, she left higher education to follow the Spirit's invitation to pursue a spiritual path more intentionally. She lived for a time in New Mexico, then moved to a town south of Denver.

In her work of spiritual accompaniment, Molly offers retreats, meditations and guidance to persons of all faiths. She embodies the mission of Charity as she offers to those who are weary, troubled, healing, or seeking the Holy in their lives, the message that God is compassion and that we are all called to learn to live in compassion.

The Congregation is truly blessed to have such women as Associates, walking in the footsteps of Saints Vincent de Paul, Louise de Marillac and Elizabeth Ann Seton. ■

*Sr. Regina Bechtle is the Charism Resource Director for the Congregation. She 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. Sister has co-edited a multi-volume compilation of St. Elizabeth Seton's writings and a photo-illustrated collection of St. Elizabeth's favorite psalms.*

## Celebrating Our Associates

(continued from front cover)

commitments which Associates would shortly make or renew. She then spoke about the significance of the brightly colored shawl which the women of Guatemala wear and which would be presented to all Associates by Sr. Dorothy. After the reception of the shawls, each of the new and renewing Associates then approached the altar to sign her/his statement. The new Associates received an Associate pin, a copy of the Congregation's Mission Statement and a New Testament from Sr. Dorothy. A celebratory luncheon followed in Smith Hall for all present.



Laura Morales Chitic is our first Associate from Guatemala.

### Meet Our New Associates

Kay Cassidy has two married sons and is the proud grandmother of six. Kay is a direct marketing professional and now works part-time for a small mailing list company. For the past three years, she has volunteered at the Convent of Mary the Queen. This has been an inspirational experience for her and she has developed a special bond with the Sister residents, staff and volunteers.

Laura Morales Chitic is our first Guatemalan Associate. Laura first met Sisters Barbara Ford and Virginia Searing in 1998 and soon began working with them in Caritas, where she walked with her people who had suffered from the violence of civil war. When the Barbara Ford Center for Peace began, Laura became a member of the Team working with Sr. Virginia in this new ministry. Becoming an Associate is a new way for Laura to collaborate with us.

Suzanne Elizabeth Elsesser is the mother of three grown children and many grandchildren. She earned a degree in social work and has focused

on using her gifts and talents for and among those in need, particularly the materially poor. Now retired, Sue works with Sr. Dorothy Gallant and the Life Experience and Faith Sharing Association, which creates faith communities with currently and formerly homeless persons.

Kitty Lunn-Macmillan and her husband live in New York. She started her professional career as an actress and dancer. Twenty-three years ago an accident ren-



Sr. Dorothy Metz shows Kitty Lunn-Macmillan where to sign her commitment statement.

dered her paraplegic. After many surgeries and rehab, Kitty resumed her career and is an advocate for dancers and actresses with disabilities. She founded the Infinity Dance Theater, a non-traditional dance company for dancers with or without disabilities. Kitty has studied Scripture and is active in her parish as lector, Eucharistic minister and in the ministry of bringing God's healing to the homebound and terminally ill.

Photos by Sr. Mary Gallagher, SC



Patricia A. Tursi shares her home for 6 months each year with her mother who visits from upstate. Pat spent 18 years in geriatrics before becoming CEO of the Elizabeth Seton Pediatric Center which provides specialized residential and rehabilitative services to medically fragile children. Her great devotion to Elizabeth Seton has enabled Pat to lead the efforts to transform the Center's culture; Elizabeth Seton's spirit is truly alive and palpable at the Pediatric Center.

### Our Renewing Associates

Associates	Years in the Program
Eilene Bertsch	2
Retta Blaney	10
Nancy Burkley	5
Mary Barrett Herbst	9
William F. Hurley	11
Rowena Kemp	2
Rose C. Meyler	2
Consuelo Kraham Velez	9

The Sisters of Charity are blessed that these dedicated lay people feel called to be associated with them in their charism, spirituality and mission without actual membership in the Congregation. ■



Eilene Bertsch reads an excerpt from her commitment statement. She's wearing a Guatemalan scarf that Sr. Dorothy presented to all the Associates.

**If you long to share your faith and answer God's call more deeply while maintaining your current lifestyle, becoming an Associate may be right for you. You'll find more information about our program online at [www.scny.org/becomeassociate.html](http://www.scny.org/becomeassociate.html) or call us at 718-549-9200.**

## SC Associate Recognized for Good Works

The most recent newsletter reporting on the progress of the Archdiocese's Bicentennial Campaign included a profile of SC Associate Margaret Comaskey. The focus of the article was on Margaret's devotion to her parish, St. Anthony's in the Bronx, which has been an important part of her life. It was there that she received the first four sacraments of the Church – Baptism, Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation – and her elementary education at the Mansion St. school. Margaret still lives in the neighborhood and is active in the parish, so it wasn't surprising that she became a leader in

the Bicentennial Campaign. Margaret also was on the committee for St. Anthony's centennial in 2008 and produced the reunion journal.

Margaret has been an SC Associate for four years. Several days each month, she comes to Mount Saint Vincent to digitize the Congregation's extensive photo collection in the Archives. This makes it much easier and faster to find sought-after images. She has generously worked on this important project for several years. ■

*Sr. Mary Gallagher has been the Director of the Associate Program since 1999.*

# Spiritual Initiatives

by Sr. Carol De Angelo, SC

Our second annual Spirituality and Wellness Gathering was held on Sunday, April 25, at the Congregation's retirement convent Mary the Queen. The day brought together 73 people who shared a common desire – to explore and deepen practices of spirituality and wellness in their lives.

Sr. Mary Kay Finneran, Convent Administrator, welcomed the diverse group that hailed from parishes, community organizations, and health care / social service agencies. The Family Health Service of the Little Sisters of the Assumption, with whom Sisters of Charity have collaborated for years, brought 17 people.

After opening the event with a breathing-as-healing exercise, the enrollees were off to the two individual workshops of their choosing. A total of 14 interactive sessions were conducted by those with expertise in various fields. Among them were Sisters of Charity of New York.



Sr. Carol De Angelo and a participant in the Healing Touch and Massage workshop.

Sr. Mary Kay Finneran presented Guided Meditation and Massage with Jane Sprecher, the physical therapist at Mary the Queen. Sr. Katherine Seibert, who is a physician, discussed Heart Health. Sr. Margaret Murphy covered Nutrition for Older Adults. Sr. Sheila Brosnan, who is a nurse, and Sr. Charlotte Raftery spoke of how Counseling and Spiritual Direction contribute to life. Sr. Margaret Ellen Burke demonstrated T'ai Chi Chih. Sr. Florence Mallon facilitated Meditative / Contemplative Music in the Convent chapel. SC

Associate Peggy Cekoric, a mother and a nurse, co-conducted a Mindful Parenting session. Other professionals spoke on Herbs for Nutrition and Wellness, Clowning and Nonviolent Peacemaking (think Patch Adams) and other communications topics.

The evaluations from the attendees at the Wellness

*(concludes on page 10)*

## Background on This Initiative

These Wellness Days grew out of a workshop presented at the Congregation's February 2007 Assembly. Interest grew over the succeeding months and the project became known as "The Sisters of Charity Initiative on Healing and Spirituality."

In our first year, we had two evening gatherings that offered the chance to learn about Vincentian Spiritual Companionship and Integrated Energy Therapy. Then there was the three-session series on St. Elizabeth Ann Seton that was held at the Seton Shrine in lower Manhattan. This series now

continues under Sr. Regina Bechtle's direction out of the Congregation's Charism Office.

Those of us who are part of the Sisters of Charity Initiative on Healing and Spirituality recognize that the Congregation's charism, history and heritage have offered, and continue to offer to us and others, gifts of healing and spirituality. We see this initiative as offering a vision of hope as well as practical and specific strategies and practices that will result in relationships, structures and systems that nurture, deepen and bring hope into the future.



# 30 Years of Good Grades

by Sr. Constance Brennan, SC

June 2010 marked the conclusion of Sr. Rosemarie Connell's 30th year as Principal of Visitation School. Her skills and experience have earned her the affectionate title, "Grand Dame of the Bronx."

Monsignor Robert Larkin, Pastor of Visitation Parish, continually praises Sr. Rosemarie for "guiding and directing our school with great expertise, untiring dedication and tremendous enthusiasm."

Under Sr. Rosemarie's leadership, Visitation has become a school of excellence. Its students participate and excel in many competitions not only in academics, but also in the area of sports and extra-curricular activities. Sr. Rosemarie has initiated and encouraged many programs and activities, including a Smart Board Instruction Program, Computer Instruction, Newspaper Club, Drama Club, ITV\* Broadcasting, Algebra honors, Basketball, Drama Club, Science Fair, and an After School Program which meets the needs of many families.

In addition to encouraging academic excellence and extra curricular challenges, Sr. Rosemarie is actively involved in the Religious Education of the School. Because of her concern for the spiritual growth of students, faculty and parents, she provides opportunities to participate in well-planned school liturgies, days of Retreat and Sacramental celebrations. In a professional and caring manner, she has offered compassion, understanding and good advice to many students and parents over the past thirty years.

Sr. Rosemarie Connell is a Sister of Charity who daily follows the ideals of her foundress, Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton, by offering her students "every service in her power," whether that be a nod of encouragement to a student or a word of financial advice to a struggling parent. As Monsignor Larkin so often states, "what a blessing Sr. Rosemarie has been to our parish and school."

Congratulations, Sr. Rosemarie. Dare we say, "Ad multos annos?" ■



Sr. Rosemarie's photo from the 2010 Visitation School yearbook. The students in this year's graduating class of 28 received three full and 12 partial scholarships to high schools.

\* ITV is the nickname for the Instructional Television service for the schools of the Archdiocese of New York.

*Sr. Constance Brennan currently is the Archivist for the Congregation. She taught the sixth grade at Visitation School from 1992 to 2007 and has been the Director of Religious Education for Visitation Parish since 1995.*

In addition to Sr. Rosemarie and Sr. Constance, two other Sisters of Charity serve at Visitation these days. Sr. Frances Keegan has taught 6th grade for three years (she replaced Sr. Constance) and Sr. Teresa Dermody has been teaching Advanced Math to 8th Graders since 1990.

The Sisters of Charity of New York began their ministry at Visitation in 1931.

## The Last Class

A New York institution ended this June when St. Patrick Old Cathedral School held its last 8th grade graduation. Yet at its end, as at its beginning in 1822, Sisters of Charity of New York were there. Sr. Winifred Lyons was a featured guest speaker and Sr. Nora Cunningham conveyed the Congregation's congratulations and blessings to the graduates.

Sr. Winifred had been a familiar face at St. Patrick Old School over the years when she was Assistant Superintendent of Pro-Life Activities for the Archdiocese. In pro-life ministry, Sister visits schools and talks about the importance of respecting all life. A 2008 school brochure features a photo of Sr. Winifred with some of the 8th graders she worked with "to develop leadership skills to stand up for pro-life issues." Her remarks to the graduates included a reminder that "when Jesus calls us, He never leaves us, even when we...may have closed the door."

Sister also related how in 1851, the boys of the old orphanage were moved to a newly-built facility in mid-town. All the available wagons and carts were being used to move furnishings and supplies; there were none on hand to transport the children. When Mother Elizabeth Boyle heard that the boys would have to walk five miles to their new home, she walked with them too.

The Old Cathedral School was Sr. Nora's first ministry and she taught four grades there over eight years. She also made her final vows in the chapel on January 4, 1970. (January 4 became Elizabeth Seton's official feastday when she was canonized in 1975; it is the anniversary of her death.)

In her remarks at the ceremony, Sr. Nora recalled how St. Elizabeth Seton sent three of her Sisters



Sr. Winifred Lyons (left) and Sr. Nora Cunningham in the doorway of St. Patrick's Old Cathedral. Pope Benedict XVI issued a papal decree dated March 17, 2010 elevating the status of the church. It is now known as the Basilica of St. Patrick's Old Cathedral. The inauguration ceremony will take place on October 31, 2010. St. Patrick's is the first church in the Archdiocese of New York to have the honor of being so connected with the Holy Father.

up to New York on their first mission to care for children at St. Patrick's; she spoke of how privileged the Congregation felt to have collaborated over the centuries with the parents, teachers, staff and priests who supported Catholic education; and assured the graduates that the Sisters would continue to pray for them as they began a new phase of their lives.

Over the course of three centuries, many of our Sisters walked with the children of St. Patrick School as they developed into young Catholics. Of the 16 living members of the Congregation who served at St. Patrick's over the years, Sr. Mary Rosilda Tabacco had the longest (and earliest) tenure, having taught there between 1930 and 1947. ■

## Spiritual Initiatives

*(continued from page 8)*

& Spirituality Day were very positive. They found the workshops helpful, informative and enriching and asked for more such opportunities. Some even wanted to return the very next week!

Kudos go to the planning committee comprised of Sisters Elizabeth Butler, Carol De Angelo and Mary Kay Finneran, and SC Associate Peggy

Cekoric, with Jane Sprecher, physical therapist at the Queen and Nancy De Lucia, a friend of Sister Carol's who is a nurse and herbalist.

For fall 2010, we are planning workshops on ways to bring nonviolent peacemaking into all aspects of our lives. We hope you'll be able to take part in one of our afternoons. ■

## A Brief History of St. Patrick

The Sisters of Charity's mission in New York began in 1817 when Mother Seton sent three of her Sisters to care for immigrant children in St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum. In 1822, the Sisters took over the free school that had been established seven years previously in the basement of the original St. Patrick's Cathedral.

The school is closing after 188 years because enrollment dwindled. For the 2009/2010 school year, there were just 129 students, down two-thirds from a decade ago. In addition, a majority of the current students were not from the immediate neighborhood, or even from Manhattan. Ironically, at one time, St. Patrick was the second largest parochial school in the Archdiocese.

The school had been a constant, stabilizing force in the neighborhood which saw many changes in the immigration population of the



St. Patrick Orphan Asylum, seen here circa 1825. This building housed the orphans that the first Sisters of Charity came to New York to care for in 1817. It became the parish school in 1851 and still stands at the corner of Mott and Prince Streets. The school building and the Old Cathedral were designated New York City landmarks on June 21, 1966.

area over the centuries. Sr. Patrick Mary Doheny, SC, who began her 33 years as principal there in 1967, said the aim of the school was to produce "the best Catholics we could send out into the world." She worked closely with the parish priests to achieve that goal. Msgr. Nicola Marinacci, the pastor from 1970 to 1985, was her great friend and colleague; he celebrated her funeral mass in August 2000.



Msgr. Nicola Marinacci (at right) chatted with an old friend in the rectory backyard at last year's opening festivities for the bicentennial of the Old Cathedral. The rectory at 263 Mulberry Street is the oldest one in the Archdiocese and is now called "The Parish House" to better reflect that it is more than a home for the priests; it's also the center of parish/community life. The backyard garden of the rectory has been named after Msgr. Marinacci.

Msgr. Marinacci has wonderful memories of the school. He was an honored guest at the June 2009 festivities that opened the six-year-long celebration of the 200th anniversary of the Old Cathedral. The Monsignor is the oldest living priest in the Archdiocese and will celebrate his 100th birthday in December.

## Honors

**Sr. Katherine Seibert** was honored at the Catskill Regional Medical Center's Physician Recognition Reception. One of her fellow doctors spoke of Sister's empathy and dedication, describing her "...as always concerned about the welfare of others around her." Sister has brought compassionate care to the poor of Sullivan County, NY for 19 years.

**Sr. Constance Kelly** was honored as a "Woman of Distinction" by the Long Island Fund for Women and Girls and by Craig Johnson, State Senator, 7th District in Nassau County. Sister was cited for having "dedicated herself to helping the impoverished and providing care to the most vulnerable among us." She has served the St. Peter of Alcantara Parish Social Ministry program for 14 years and worked with Port Washington's immigrant communities.

Sr. Constance has also served non-English speaking constituents as a missionary in Chile (four years) and in Guatemala (15 years.)

**Sr. Patricia Brennan** received the 2010 Meritorious Service Recognition Award from Catholic Charities. She was honored for her 21 years of social work in Harlem at Fox House, one of the Congregation's sponsored ministries. Sister is the official Grandmother to young mothers and their children. Sr. Pat also has a long history of service to other institutions affiliated with Catholic Charities.

**Sisters Bernadette Del Frate** and **Mary Catherine Cleary** were honored by St. Gabriel's in East Elmhurst for giving loving support to the parish children during their combined 22 years of

service. The occasion marked the 70th anniversary of the school and the Sisters' Jubilees as women religious.

Sr. Bernadette (60th Jubilee) was principal at St. Gabriel's (1966 – 1972). Sr. Mary Catherine (50th Jubilee) was a teacher and principal there (1966 – 1982).

**SC Associate Sandy Figueroa** was named the 2010 Distinguished Educator of the Year by the faculty, staff and students of Hostos Community College in the Bronx. Sandy chairs the mentoring program at Hostos and was recognized for all she does to improve the lives and the future of her students.

**Sisters (and Daughters) of Charity** were honored at the convention of the National Catholic Education Association. This was in recognition of the ministry begun by Elizabeth Seton. Forty-seven of our Sisters currently working in schools were cited.

**The Congregation** won two first-place Lumen Awards in the 2010 competition sponsored by the National Catholic Development Conference.

*Vision* (which you are reading now) won for the second time in three years as a Best Publication.

The 200th Anniversary Journal, developed for our Sponsorship Celebration last September, won first place in the Integrated Fundraising category.

The Journal committee included Sisters Mary Ellen Blumlein, Constance Brennan, Margaret Donegan, Jane Iannucelli and Rita King, with William Hurley, the Congregation's Director of Development. ■

### The College of Mount Saint Vincent paid special tribute to two of our Sisters.

**Sr. Kathleen Tracey** was honored at the College's Scholarship Tribute Dinner for her 60 years as a teacher and administrator. Sister is Professor Emerita of Biology, Associate VP for Institutional Advancement, and is active on College committees. Under her watch, CMSV became the first undergraduate school in the country to offer bioethics.

**Sr. Regina Bechtle** received the Elizabeth Seton Medal at commencement. President Dr. Charles Flynn said that in awarding its highest honor, the College, "recognizes your national and international leadership in articulating and promoting Setonian spirituality through scholarship, teaching, and service."

# Operation Christmas Child

by Sr. Janet Jeffers, IHM

During the fall of 2009, the Sisters at Mount Saint Vincent Convent participated in OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD, an annual event organized by Samaritan's Purse, an international Christian evangelical and relief organization. This program provides gifts to children in countries from Eastern Europe to Africa and Indonesia.

Operation Christmas Child has been in existence since 1993 following the Gospel message to bring relief to the poor, hungry and suffering people in our midst.

Bruce Weaver, Director of Maintenance at Mount Saint Vincent Convent, told some of the Sisters about this charity which he and his family have participated in for 16 years.

When the Sisters heard about this, they decided this would be a very meaningful opportunity of sharing Christmas with needy people in other countries. As a result, the Sisters bought suggested items and prepared over 20 Christmas Boxes to be shipped to poor countries around the world.

In addition, Sr. Mary Aquin Flaherty brought the idea to the attention of the principals of several NYC parochial schools:

- Sr. Rosemarie Connell, of Visitation School, the Bronx
- Dr. Patrick Taharally, of Transfiguration School in Chinatown
- Theresa Bernero, of St. Joseph's School in Yorkville (the east 80s).



Bruce Weaver and Sr. Mary Aquin Flaherty with a sample of one of the shoeboxes that the Sisters at the Mount Saint Vincent Convent carefully filled and decorated last year for needy children around the world.

When the principals heard about the program, they gave a resounding “Yes!” to the project. The school children echoed that same response. With the generosity of these children and their families, this charity resulted in hundreds of shoeboxes being collected and shipped throughout the world – all of this initiated by the Sisters of Charity.

It is so ironic that as poor and needy as the children in these schools happen to be, they wanted to participate and help others like themselves or in even greater hardship. How well they have learned the lesson of sharing the little that they have with others!

The program provides needed items for children ranging from infants up to the age of 14 years. Boxes are prepared for both boys and girls. Suggestions for the shoe boxes includes products for daily hygiene, school supplies, and small clothing articles, along with a simple toy or two.

You'll find more information about Operation Christmas Child, including a video on how to pack a box, online at [www.samaritanspurse.org/occ](http://www.samaritanspurse.org/occ)

Our Sisters will be participating in this program again this year. Would you like to join our “team”? We can ship all the boxes (the Sisters', the school children's and yours) together. Let us know.

We think you'll find this a great way to participate in “Christmas Around the World.” ■

*Sr. Janet Jeffers, IHM, is past administrator at Mount Saint Vincent Convent. She is a member of the Congregation of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.*

## In Memoriam



### **Sr. Eleanor M. Gunn, SC** **Educator**

*Religious Name: Sr. Marie David, SC*  
*Entered: 1960 • Final Vows: 1968*  
*Age at death: 72 (5/29/10)*

Sr. Eleanor devoted 47 years of her religious ministry to teaching. She was known as a very patient instructor who gave many hours to assisting individual students, persisting with them even when they would have given up.

She was fun-loving and cheerful, even when troubled by chronic pain. She treasured the bonds of family and friendship and was proud of her Scottish and Irish roots.

Sister's friends have many a story of her gentleness, courage, thoughtfulness and empathy for others. Poor health slowed her a bit but never stopped her from achieving what she wanted to do.

#### **Ministries**

##### *Bronx:*

- St. Barnabas HS, 1993-99
- College of Mount Saint Vincent, 2003-2010

##### *Manhattan:*

- Epiphany, 1963-64
- St. Joseph Academy, 1991-92

##### *Westchester:*

- Dobbs Ferry: Our Lady of Victory Academy, 1969-76
- New Rochelle: Iona Prep, 1992-93;  
St. Gabriel HS, 1976-83
- Rye: Academy of Resurrection, 1983-91
- White Plains: Academy of Our Lady of Good Counsel, 1999-2003
- Yonkers: Elizabeth Seton Academy, 1964-69



### **Sr. Mary McCrorken, SC** **Educator / Administrator**

*Religious Name: Sr. Mary Leo, SC*  
*Entered: 1942 • Final Vows: 1947*  
*Age at death: 87 (6/11/10)*

Sr. Mary's religious life encompassed several ministries: 25 years as an elementary school educator; three years as a Regional Coordinator for the Congregation; 26 years as a social worker.

She is remembered as authentic, fun-loving, non-complaining, faithful to family and work relationships, hopeful and optimistic, especially for the dreams and ideas of others. A lifelong friend spoke of her "innate responsiveness" to people in any need.

Sister focused on making things better for others – for students and parents, for troubled children, for co-workers, for senior citizens, for the Sisters – wherever the Spirit led her during her long ministry as a Sister of Charity.

#### **Ministries**

##### *Bronx:*

- Visitation, 1945-46
- Our Lady of Angels, 1946-48
- St. Barnabas, 1948-57

##### *Manhattan:*

- St. Agnes, 1943-44
- New York Foundling Hospital, 1968-71
- Institute of Applied Human Dynamics, 1988-89
- St. Malachy's Encore Senior Center, 1989-97

##### *Brooklyn:*

- St. Joseph Children Services, 1971-86

##### *Queens:*

- St. Gabriel, 1944-45

##### *North of New York City:*

- Yonkers: St. Denis 1957-60
- Stony Point: Immaculate Conception, 1960-62
- Saugerties: St. Mary of the Snow, 1962-1968 (principal)



## JULY

- 7-30:** The summer session of our English-as-a-second-language (ESL) program helps 37 adults from 11 countries better their prospects.
- 24-31:** Our first Earth Connections week gives volunteers at our Sisters Hill Farm a chance to gain a greater appreciation for the sacredness of the earth and to learn about the values that may shape our planet's future.

## AUGUST

- 12:** The 419th anniversary of the birth of Louise de Marillac Le Gras. St. Louise worked with St. Vincent de Paul and founded the Daughters of Charity in 1633.
- 28:** Elizabeth Ann Bayley is born in New York City in 1774.

## SEPTEMBER

- 13:** SC Associate Retta Blaney produces the annual Broadway Blessing at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine.
- 14:** The 35th anniversary of the canonization of Elizabeth Ann Bayley Seton, the first American- born saint and the founder of the Sisters of Charity in the Americas.
- 18:** We celebrate the Golden Jubilees of 15 of our Sisters.
- 24:** The traveling museum show "Women & Spirit" opens at Liberty Island in New York Harbor. This project of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious sheds light on the often unknown contributions of Catholic Sisters in America.
- 27:**
- The 350th anniversary of the death of St. Vincent de Paul who dedicated himself to the salvation of the poor. He founded the Congregation of the Mission.
  - The start of our 8-week fall ESL session.
- 28:** *Lay Ecclesial Ministry: Pathways Toward the Future* will be available from publisher Rowman & Littlefield. This new book is edited by SC Associate Zeni Fox and contains an essay by Sr. Regina Bechtle, SC.
- 30:** Our fourth Annual Golf Outing. Join us at the North Hempstead Country Club for a wonderful day. Proceeds benefit our Sisters in retirement.

### *Reflection:*

*"If you are to do His work, the strength will be given you."*

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

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We hope you'll be able to join us at our fourth fundraiser in support of our Sisters in retirement. As before, it will be held at the lovely North Hempstead Country Club on Long Island.

Enjoy 18 holes on a great A.W. Tillinghast-designed course; carts and caddies provided. Wonderful food all day, from brunch through the award dinner. All for just \$300 per golfer.

Shotgun start at noon; best ball format.

Prizes and awards follow dinner.

Full details are at our web site ([www.scny.org](http://www.scny.org)) where you can register for this event.

Need more information about this? Contact Bill Hurley at 718-549-9200 x 234 or [bhurley@scny.org](mailto:bhurley@scny.org)

The traveling museum show  
"Women & Spirit" opens in  
New York on September 24, 2010



This project of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious sheds light on the often unknown contributions of Catholic Sisters in America. It showcases the innovative, action-oriented women – including the Sisters of Charity of New York, of course – who played a significant role in shaping our nation's social and cultural landscape since the first Ursulines arrived in New Orleans in 1727. Our Congregation is represented by our work at The New York Foundling.

New York is the fifth stop on the exhibit's schedule since it opened in May 2009. It will be on display here through December at the Ellis Island Immigration Museum. You can enjoy a "virtual visit" online at [www.womenandspirit.org](http://www.womenandspirit.org)