



SISTERS  
of CHARITY  
NEW YORK

# Vision

VOLUME 11, ISSUE 1, Winter 2006/7

## Sisters Honored for Making Life Better in the Bahamas

On January 4th, Elizabeth Seton's feast day, Catholics from across The Bahamas gathered at St. Francis Xavier Cathedral in Nassau to honor the Sisters of Charity of New York for their 117 years of service to their island country.

Archbishop Patrick Pinder of Nassau officiated at the special liturgical celebration at which a plaque was dedicated to the 212 Sisters who developed the local Catholic community, and the country as a whole, since first coming there in 1889.

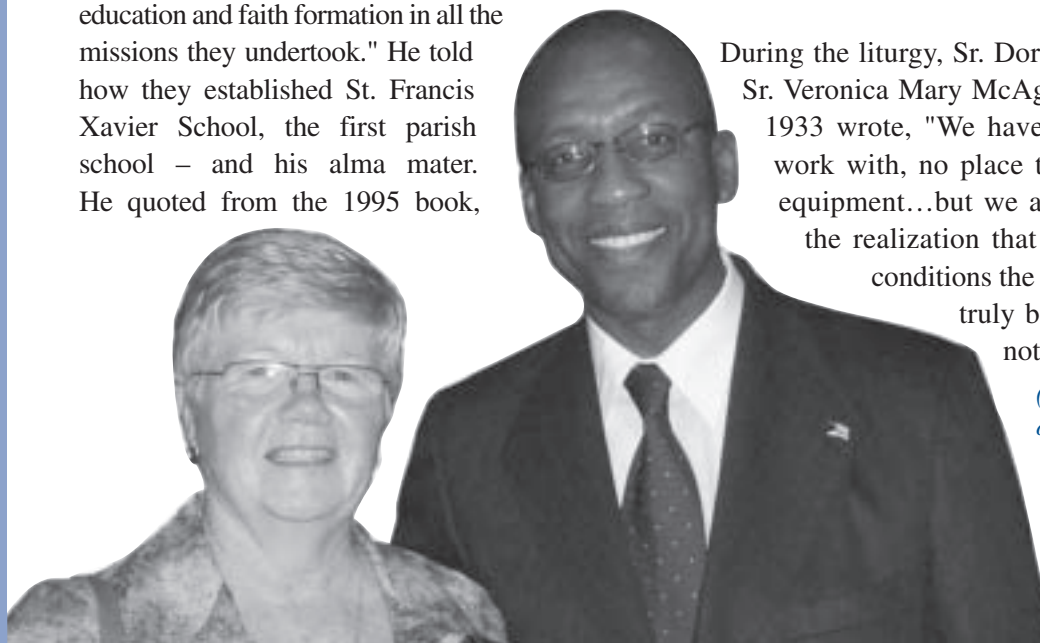
In his homily, Archbishop Pinder noted how the Sisters "intertwined social ministry with education and faith formation in all the missions they undertook." He told how they established St. Francis Xavier School, the first parish school – and his alma mater. He quoted from the 1995 book,

*From the Void to the Wonderful: A History of the Roman Catholic Church in The Bahamas*, in which author Patricia Ginton-Meicholas wrote that the Sisters' work came to "be acknowledged as one of the outstanding contributions to the social and educational development in this country." You can read Archbishop Pinder's full homily online at [www.archdioceseofnassau.org/homilySisCharity07.htm](http://www.archdioceseofnassau.org/homilySisCharity07.htm)

The Congregation was represented at the ceremony by Sr. Dorothy Metz, President, Sr. Joan Anderson, who has worked in the islands for 41 years, and Sr. Regina Murphy, who was missioned there.

During the liturgy, Sr. Dorothy quoted Sr. Veronica Mary McAghan who in 1933 wrote, "We have nothing to work with, no place to store any equipment...but we are happy in the realization that under such conditions the work will... truly be God's and not ours."

*(continued on page 3)*



*Over the years, the Sisters prepared Bahamians for leadership positions, including Archbishop Pinder and Alfred Sears, the Attorney General and Minister of Education seen here with Sr. Dorothy Metz. Many other prominent Bahamians also attended the tribute to the Congregation.*

### In this issue:

- Mission Possible: The Bahamas
- 160th Anniversary as New Yorkers
- Feast Day & Holidays
- Retreat & Reviews



## Letter from the President

Dear Sisters, Associates and Friends,

In 1817, Mother Elizabeth Seton sent three Sisters of Charity from Emmitsburg, MD, to New York City to open an orphanage. Thirty years later, there were 62 Sisters in New York and they faced a momentous decision: whether to remain in New York taking care of orphan boys or to return to Emmitsburg. The choice to stay would involve separation from their community and founding a new one in New York. It was a heart-rending decision. Thirty-three Sisters, moved by their ministry to the orphans, decided to form a new Community. It is not surprising that these Sisters placed the care of the orphans before their strong ties with each other. It was about the ministry, about meeting unmet needs.

In 1889, at the request of Archbishop Michael Corrigan of New York, five Sisters went to Nassau in The Bahamas. Three days after their arrival they opened a free school for poor children in two rooms of the convent. When they heard how great the need was, more Sisters volunteered to go. With very few resources, they continued to open schools and clinics, to visit the sick, the dying, women in prison, and the lepers.

On January 4, 2007, the Feast of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Archbishop Patrick Pinder of The Bahamas celebrated a special liturgy at St. Francis Xavier Cathedral in thanksgiving for the ministry of the Sisters of Charity of New York in his island country. (He is one of the many Bahamians who were taught by our Sisters.) I was privileged to attend. After the Mass, a plaque, inscribed with the names of the 212 Sisters who served there, was unveiled on the outside wall of the Cathedral. It was a great honor for me to hear so many people express gratitude for the work of our Congregation.

The article in *The Nassau Tribune* expressed it so well: "The Sisters prepared the Bahamian people for the day when they would be in charge of their own destiny – and so the torch has passed. Their mission has been accomplished."

It has always been about the ministry, about meeting unmet needs.

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

## Bahamian Tribute...(continued from page 1)

### In the beginning

In 1889, Mother General Mary Ambrosia Sweeney at Mount Saint Vincent answered NY Archbishop Michael Corrigan's call to provide educational and social services to the poor and needy in the islands. She selected five Sisters from many volunteers to start the mission and accompanied them to Nassau. Sr. Marie Dolores Van Rensselaer was appointed superior. (*Read about Sister's remarkable life on p. 6.*) Their ship arrived on October 28, 1889, after a 5-day voyage.

Within a week, the Sisters had opened a free school for black children in two of the largest rooms in their limited temporary quarters. At that time, blacks were not given the opportunity to benefit from an education, public or otherwise. Fifteen children enrolled initially. That number doubled within a week, and by the end of the month a larger facility was needed.

Over the years, in addition to their educational endeavors, the Sisters opened several clinics and a day care nursery, visited prisoners and lepers, and also trained the native women interested in a religious life.

### Lives well spent

In his 1973 book, *Upon These Rocks: Catholics in the Bahamas*, Fr. Colman J. Barry wrote that the arrival of the

Sisters of Charity of New York "was the single most important development of Catholicism in the islands to date."

The December 29, 2006 issue of *The Nassau Daily Tribune* covered the Sisters' contributions to the islands and reprinted an editorial written for their 50th anniversary there because the 1939 tribute was as valid now as then. Today's editor concluded with "The Sisters prepared the Bahamian people for the day when they would be in charge of their own destiny.... Their mission has been accomplished."



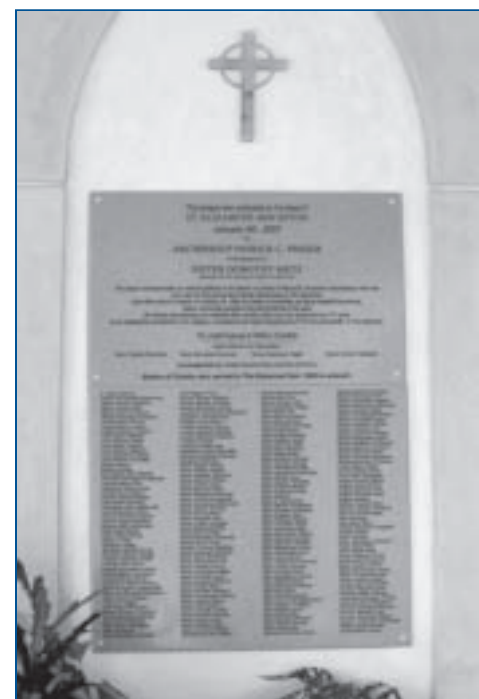
*Sr. Joan Anderson from a child's perspective in the nursery at Nazareth Centre.*

Sr. Joan Anderson is the only member of the Congregation now serving in The Bahamas. She first came there in 1963 as a teacher. Since 2001, Sister has been the administrator of the Nazareth Centre, a home in Nassau for abused children. ■

### Sr. Joan Anderson is still on mission in The Bahamas. These 29 Sisters, who also served there, are now in New York.

Joan (James Marietta) Burbage	Elizabeth Judge
Mary Regina Caulfield	Eileen T. Kelly
Anne Miriam Connellan	Marie Liguori Leyer
Loretta Josepha Conran	Regina Michael Lowe
Lorraine Cooper	Eileen (Regina Francis) Maher
Mary Eucharia Carrigan	Mary E. Mc Cormick
Margaret Rose	Margaret McEntee
(Elizabeth Marietta) Curry	Helen McTaggart
Rita Dermody	Regina Murphy
Mary (Peter Mary) Donagher	Mary (Maria Bernard) O'Brien
Margaret (Clare Marie) Dowling	Frances Maureen Smith
Sheila Mary Finucane	Grace Anne Troisi
Miriam Laboure Hart	Marie Julia Whalen
A. Jean Iannone	Margaret Mary
Helen R. (Maria Francis) Jarczynski	(William Marie) Whalen
Virginia Catherine Jarczynski	

*The 212 Sisters of Charity of New York who have served in The Bahamas since 1889 are listed alphabetically – by the first name (either religious or birth) by which they were known while on mission there – on this plaque at St. Francis Xavier Cathedral in Nassau.*



## New Beginnings

by Sr. Mary Mc Cormick

January 1, 1847, marked the beginning of the Sisters of Charity of New York as an independent community. On its eve, the Sisters (the number would eventually reach 33) who chose to remain in New York gathered at St. Patrick's Convent, Mott Street, and elected Elizabeth Boyle as their first superior.

Although 29 Sisters opted to return to Emmitsburg, MD, Elizabeth and her new Council closed none of the schools and asylums – nine institutions in all – that then served the people of New York. By February,

several young women joined the new foundation.



*Mother Elizabeth Boyle, circa 1858. She died in 1861.*

Since that time, a steady stream of women have cast their lot with this Congregation, dedicated to a mission of charity and service to all, especially, but not exclusively, to the poor of New York.

These are the facts, but they tell us little of the story beneath the story – of the constellation of decisions, assumptions, and misunderstandings

that led to the split between two groups named Charity, one in Emmitsburg, the other in New York.

The vision of the early founders – Elizabeth Ann Seton, her fledgling group of Sisters, and the clergy, led by Archbishop John Carroll of Baltimore, and the Sulpician émigré priests – was simplicity itself: to re-create on American shores the kind of active apostolic society first realized by Vincent de Paul and Louise De Marillac in 17th century France. They were to consider “the streets of the city their cloister, their ‘cells’ a rented room, their veil holy modesty, their chapel the parish church.”

This model was a good fit for the post-colonial Catholic Church. Vincent's advice, to ‘do what is before you,’ meant that the primary ministry of the early U.S. Community would be what seemed most needed, and that was the education

of girls. As wives and mothers, well-educated Catholic women would be the bedrock of the Church, which then was often regarded with disdain, even hostility, in the newly established country.

Even before the Community began to spread, the need for other kinds of ministries, such as the care of orphans, became a necessity and, in some places, a priority.

In the 1830s and '40s, several shifts took place within and beyond the Sisters that, taken together, led to the painful separation between Emmitsburg and New York.

- The Sulpicians had been the Superiors of the Community since its inception. They were mandated to return to the original purpose for which they had been started, the training of the clergy, so they were anxious to find other priests to take over responsibility for the young Community. It had been their understanding that eventually the American Community would affiliate with the Daughters of Charity in France. (Many of the founding Sisters, including Elizabeth Boyle, did not share this assumption.) It was natural for the Sulpicians to turn to the Vincentian priests for this task. In France and elsewhere, the Daughters and Vincentians were part of the ‘double family’ of charity.
- The Emmitsburg leadership read literally the rule as adapted by Mother Seton (“young persons of their own sex...”). Concerned about keeping boys and girls together, they sought to hand over the orphan boys in the Sisters’ charge to others. In many places this could be done fairly easily; the numbers of orphans were not large. However, in a port city like New York, there were at any given time hundreds of orphan boys to care for, and no other religious group at hand. The alternatives were grim: leave the children homeless and victims of street gangs, or place them in Protestant-run orphan asylums where they would surely be lost to the Catholic Faith.
- Archbishop John Hughes of New York had known Mother Seton and many of the early Congregation. Indeed, one of his sisters became Mother Angela, SC. He depended on the experienced leadership and hard work of the Sisters to carry out vast works of charity in his diocese. His own preference was for a diocesan congregation under his direction. So when things came to a head in 1846, he indicated his willingness to accept those Sisters of Charity who wished to remain in New York and become part of a



new diocesan foundation. He stopped short, though, of interfering in the internal workings of the Congregation and continued to negotiate with their leadership to staff schools and asylums. Even before the events of 1845/6, he was corresponding with the Irish Christian Brothers to take over the care of the boys in the diocese, but there were many delays in their arrival.

Things became increasingly difficult for all involved. In the fall of 1845, the New York Sisters were ordered to leave the orphanages. There was a flurry of communications between the major participants in the unfolding drama, but neither side seemed capable of compromise.

Then, in December 1846, the decision to withdraw all the Sisters from the New York missions was reached. Reverend Louis Deluol, the Sulpician Superior of the Community, wrote to New York. He asked each Sister to let him know in writing how she would respond to this development: by returning to Emmitsburg; by leaving the community (and return to the 'world'); by joining another group. Each was obliged to make her decision without speaking of it to anyone. Sisters who had been friends for years made different choices and went their

separate ways. But in the end, for the 33 who remained in NY, there was no option. "If we do not take care of these poor orphans, who will?"

The 29 Sisters who returned to Emmitsburg had made their choice out of concern for the unity of the Community. In 1850 they became a province of the Daughters of Charity, dedicated to the service of the sick and the poor.

The price each group paid was high: there were strained relations between them for many years. The directive, "Let their names be heard no more in the valley" assigned the New York "renegades" to a place in limbo for a long time.

But long before the beginning of this new century, the wounds caused by the split have healed and a loving relationship between Charity and Charity exists. This is as it should be: for the sake of the mission, the Charity of Christ urges us always forward. ■

*Sr. Mary Mc Cormick is currently engaged in Retreat and Spiritual Direction programs and Charism Writing Projects for the Congregation.*



*The first motherhouse of the Sisters of Charity of New York – Mount Saint Vincent at McGown's Pass – opened in 1847. This site is now within Central Park at approximately 105th St. & Fifth Avenue.*

# Amazing Grace: Sr. Marie Dolores Van Rensselaer

by Sr. Mary Mc Cormick

There was a time when news that a celebrity – perhaps even a ‘movie star’ – becoming a Catholic was cause for elation (among Catholics, at least), for a kind of quiet triumph that another soul had become part of the fold.

Conversion isn’t viewed in quite the same way today. Still, that mysterious movement of grace which persuades the mind and heart of a seeker to travel by another path reminds us that our faith, however we name it, is a gift.

Sisters of Charity of New York typically are women born into the Catholic faith and come from families and ethnicities where their religious beliefs and practices played a vital role.

There are notable exceptions to this pattern: Elizabeth Ann Seton and Elizabeth Boyle, as we know, were born and raised Protestant. And along the way, other women who had their own conversion experiences chose to join us and add unique gifts of nature and grace to our Charity heritage.

Euphemia Van Rensselaer, granddaughter of the last of the great Dutch patroons who owned vast estates in the Albany-Troy area of New York, is one such ‘convert’ whose story spans two centuries of dedication and service.

Born in 1843, Euphemia grew up a child of wealth and privilege. A turning point in her life came during the Civil War when her father, an Inspector General in the Union Army, contracted typhoid fever. Euphemia and her mother rushed to his deathbed, and it was there she vowed to devote the rest of her life to caring for the sick.

In 1873 she enrolled in the first nursing class at Bellevue Hospital where she received training from Sr. Helen, an Anglican nun who herself had learned the art of nursing from Florence Nightingale. Shortly after she completed her training, Euphemia went to England to join the same Anglican order.

She spent time reading the classics of Catholic spirituality and felt drawn to explore Catholicism. She and her brother, who was studying for the Anglican priesthood in Oxford at the same time, and also feeling the tug of the Catholic faith, traveled to France and were there received into the Church by a Jesuit priest in 1877. When they returned to New York, Henry entered the Jesuits; after ordination he was assigned to St. Francis Xavier parish in Manhattan and spent his entire priestly life there.



*Sr. Marie Dolores Van Rensselaer in 1888, when she was at New York Foundling.*

Her new faith gave Euphemia a new way of fulfilling her desire to serve the sick poor. She entered the Sisters of Charity in 1878, when she was 35. While still a novice, Sister Marie Dolores, as she was known, was sent to The New York Foundling Hospital to start a training program for pediatric nurses. She remained there for the first ten years of her religious life.

This was a ‘first’ in a life that seemed to be a series of firsts:

- In 1889 she was the first Sister Servant of the newly established mission in the Bahamas. She founded it on the rock solid foundations of faith, compassion, and care which were – and are – hallmarks of our Sisters’ presence there to this day.
- In 1894 she returned to NY to take charge of the just-opened Seton Hospital in the Bronx where tuberculosis patients were cared for.
- In 1897 she was named first director of Grace Institute in Manhattan, a free school for women with classes in sewing, cooking, and secretarial subjects.
- In 1901 she opened Nazareth Day Nursery on 15th St. in Manhattan to care for the children of working mothers. This was her favorite mission because it was the fulfillment of her brother’s long cherished dream and allowed her to work with him in the spiritual care of the women whose children were in her charge.



It was also her last mission: physically fragile, she returned to The Foundling Hospital and spent her last year there, where she had begun 35 years before. Her religious life had come full circle.

in our lives. Sister Marie Dolores is a shining example of one who recognized the pull of grace, the grace that saw her home. ■

Grace has its moments, we are told, and our hearts must be open to recognize the call of grace in its many manifestations

### Other interesting facts about Sr. Marie Dolores

Not many of us achieve *any* firsts, but Sr. Marie Dolores:

- was said to be the first trained nurse in the United States.
- founded the Bellevue Training School for Nurses in Manhattan.
- was the first woman to assist as nurse at a surgical operation: the amputation of a leg.
- designed the first nurses' uniform: blue & white dress of "suitable wash material" – seersucker – with collar and cuffs, an apron and, in 1876, a cap.

A portrait of Sister's aunt Euphemia White Van Rensselaer hangs in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. It was painted by George P.A. Healy in 1842, the year before her marriage to John Church Cruger.

Her grandniece was actress Jane Wyatt, who starred in the 1937 film *Lost Horizon* and in the 1954-1960 TV series *Father Knows Best*. Wyatt's mother, the former Euphemia Van Rensselaer Waddington, was a drama critic for the periodical *Catholic World*, a contributing writer to *Commonweal*, and president of Catholic Big Sisters. Both of Wyatt's parents were converts to Catholicism.



*Sr. Marie Dolores is at the far left in the third row in this 1891 group photo of the staff and children at the Nassau mission.*

## Honors and Happenings



*At the presentation, from left, Sisters Dorothy Metz, Eileen T. Kelly, Katherine Seibert, Grace Therese Murray, Jane Iannucelli, Margaret Ellen Burke, & Rita McIvor.*

**Sr. Katherine Seibert**, who is an oncologist, was the recipient in November of the 2006 SYDA Foundation Community Service Award. SYDA is a global, non-profit organization that teaches Siddha Yoga, which inspires people around the world to meditate, study and integrate great humanitarian virtues into every aspect of their lives. Sister Katherine was selected for her dedicated and innovative care of cancer patients in Sullivan County, NY.

When she came to that region in 1991, Sister was the first oncologist to offer local treatment to local cancer patients. She founded an award-winning cancer care program at Catskill Regional Medical Center, where she served as Chief of Oncology until her retirement in 2003. She continues to offer medical skills at Hudson River HealthCare in Monticello.

Last year, Sister also was named a "Local Legend." As part of the Celebration of America's Physicians program, members of Congress nominate women who have made an extraordinary commitment to improve health on a local level. Sr. Katherine is one of only four "Local Legends" from New York State.

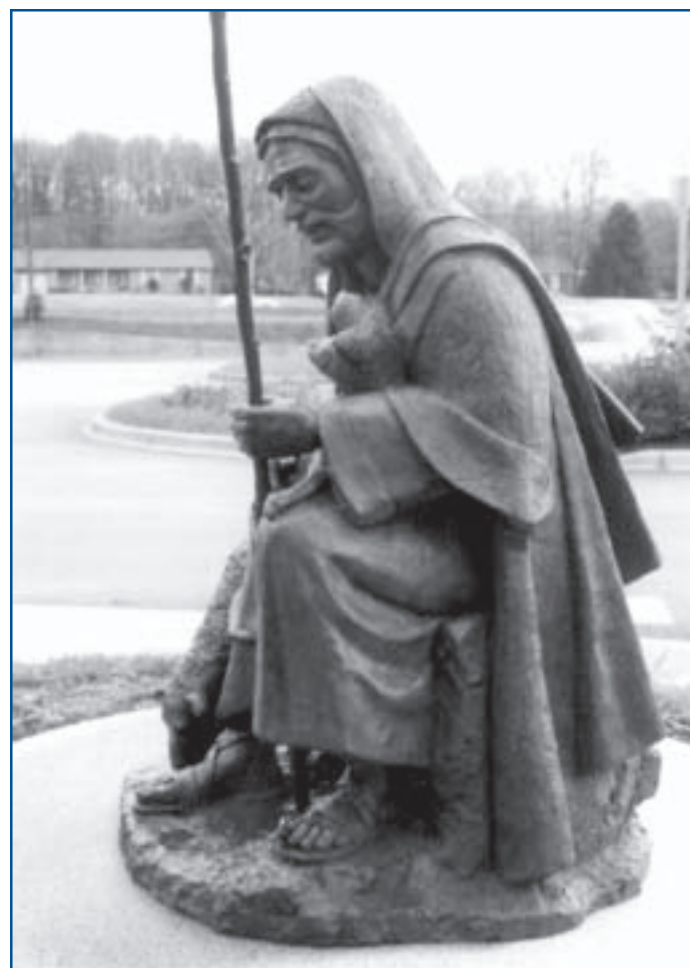
**Sr. Margaret Beaudette** oversaw the installation of two of her sculptures at Flaget Memorial Hospital in Bardstown, KY in mid-November. *The Good Shepherd* (right), which weighs about 960 lbs. and is larger than life, faces the front entrance of this Catholic hospital founded by the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth. *Jesus and the Child* is in the Serenity Garden in a rear courtyard. This sculpture was donated by the Haydon Family Foundation and shows a young girl talking with Jesus. Sr. Margaret's grandniece Christine served as the model for the child.

**Sr. Dorothy Metz** was among the dignitaries who took part in the ribbon-cutting ceremony on October 24th for the new psychiatric facility at St. Joseph's Medical Center in Yonkers. The Intermediate Length of Stay Inpatient Psychiatric Unit is the first of its kind in New York State. It is designed to shorten the waiting list of mentally ill people seeking longer-term treatment.

In his remarks, Michael J. Spicer, President & CEO of St. Joseph's, said "Our new unit will...contribute to our institution's...ability to continue its mission of local service in accord with the directives of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Vincent de Paul, our sponsoring organization."

The Sisters founded St. Joseph's in 1888. The hospital has always been a leader in mental health care.

**Sr. Maria Goretti** attended the alumnae luncheon for the Academy of Mount Saint Vincent in Tuxedo Park on October 26th. She represented all the Sisters who had taught at this Orange County, NY school. Alumnae from several



*The Good Shepherd by Sr. Margaret Beaudette*



years were present, particularly the class of 1961 which was celebrating its 45th anniversary. Everyone praised the Sisters of Charity and expressed gratitude for the foundation they had received from us. The Academy closed in 1972.

**Sr. Mary Ann Garisto** participated in a "Greening the Campus" conference in mid-November. She and representatives of other Hudson Valley colleges met to develop strategies for integrating environmentally sound practices and green

attitudes into campus communities. Sister's office is on the campus of Mount Saint Vincent.

The annual **Mass for Our Departed** was held on November 5th. It is our way of honoring our late Sisters and Former Members with their family members and friends. Many expressed appreciation for the honor given to the deceased and the opportunity to be part of this important day in the life of our Congregation.

## *The Charity of Christ Impels Us*

**The Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton School** in Shrub Oak, NY, celebrated its 40th anniversary on November 5th. The parish in this northern Westchester County town holds the distinction of being the first American Catholic one graced with the name of the first American-born saint.

Sr. Gabriel Miriam Obraz taught 1st grade when the school opened in 1966 and has been principal since 1974. The program for the Mass of Thanksgiving listed the 17 Sisters of Charity of New York who have served there over the years. Sr. Eileen Martin, who returned for the occasion, taught 3rd grade when the school began.

Children from all eight grades served in various capacities during the Mass. Sr. Gabriel coordinated the music for the liturgy and played the piano for the closing song, "A Very Special Woman," about Elizabeth Ann Seton. For 40 years, Sr. Gabriel has shown herself to be a very special woman, too. ■



*Members of the Congregation who attended the school anniversary included, starting at the left, Sisters Margaret Ellen Burke, Marita Regina Bronner, Margaret McEntee, Eileen Martin, Gabriel Miriam Obraz, Margaret M. Kelly, Theresa Rybarik, Nora Cunningham and Winifred Lyons. The Sisters are wearing red carnations representing the ruby, the gemstone associated with 40th anniversaries.*

## Feast Day Festivities

January 4th was the feast day of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton. She was canonized in Rome in 1975. Here's a sampling of how the occasion was observed in different places.

**Online**, you'll find a prayer service, entitled "Elizabeth Seton: Star-Gazer," which Sr. Mary Mc Cormick wrote for this year's celebration. It's at [www.famvin.net/en/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=4924](http://www.famvin.net/en/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=4924)

The **Shrine of St. Elizabeth Seton** on State Street in lower Manhattan is the house where the Setons lived before sailing to Italy in 1803. About 40 people attended Vespers (evening prayer) this year. Sr. Kathleen Flanagan, SC of Convent Station, NJ, addressed the gathering and said, "Elizabeth Seton was named a saint not because of what she did, but because she had the grace to live the life that God gave her fully – to do the ordinary, extraordinarily well."

At the **College of Mount Saint Vincent** in the Bronx, Sr. Dominica Rocchio talked at the Betty Bayley Brunch, the annual event that commemorates St. Elizabeth Seton's feast. Sisters and staff provide baked goods for all to enjoy. Sr. Dominica compared Elizabeth's experience of home and homelessness to our own times.

At the **St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School** in Shrub Oak, NY, Sr. Gabriel Miriam Obraz and her staff organized events for the entire month. On the 4th itself, children attended a special Mass, started a novena of prayers from St. Elizabeth's writings, and enjoyed an extra special lunch that day: pizza and dessert!

The parish feast was celebrated at all six masses on the weekend of January 28th to tie in with the opening of Catholic School Week. At the reception and school open house, a slim mother wore a traditional Sister of Charity habit and another woman came dressed as Elizabeth Bayley might have when she was a debutante in New York.

At **The Elizabeth Seton Pediatric Center** in Manhattan, Sr. Kathleen Aucoin organized a day which included a liturgy for employees and quizzes on the life of Mother Seton. Sister also created a Power Point presentation about St. Elizabeth which played in the Center's lobby all day. In addition, Sr. Kathleen created a 2007 calendar book in which the days important to Mother Seton and the Congregation were highlighted.



*This stained glass window is in the St. Elizabeth Seton Shrine at Battery Park in New York City.*

At the **John A. Coleman School and Children's Rehabilitation Center** in White Plains NY, Sr. Ellen Rose O'Connell hosted an open house. She set up her Pastoral Care office as Elizabeth Seton's living room. Employees stopped in during their breaks for tea and cake and to watch a reflective video on Mother Seton. The Congregation became the new sponsor of all the education programs at this school in July 2006, so Elizabeth Seton is new to many up there. The New York Foundling started the Coleman School to support children whose severe disabilities prevented them from receiving education in a traditional environment.

At the **Seton Residence** on W. 70th Street in Manhattan, the ladies there celebrated, too. For over 15 years, the former Blessed Sacrament Convent has been a home to young women who serve for one year in NYC Catholic Schools after graduating from college. This program is rather like a Peace Corps that's sponsored by the NY Archdiocese. Sr. Deanna Sabetta, CND, heads up the program.

At the **Church of Saint Andrew** on Staten Island, a celebration of the life and ministry of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton was held on the evening of January 13. This is the Episcopal church where Elizabeth Seton's maternal grandfather served as rector. Many in her family have been laid to rest in its cemetery. ■

# Turning to One Another: A Community-Building Retreat

by Sr. Mary Gallagher

On October 13, 2006, 15 SC Associates and three Sisters gathered in Stanfordville, NY for our annual Associate retreat. A perfect fall weekend with all its grandeur and color welcomed us as we arrived. Sr. Mary Mc Cormick was with us to guide our time together and Fr. Joe Foley, CM, celebrated liturgy with us. The theme for this year, *Turning to One Another\**, was borrowed from the title of a book by Margaret Wheatley. Her premise is that we could change the world if we just begin listening to one another again.

Comments from retreat participants attest to the power of listening in the building of relationships and community:

*This year with the continued guidance of Sr. Mary Mc Cormick, Associates seemed to have forged a deeper bond of trust through our sharing. Listening to one another's stories has drawn us closer. It's so great to see the greater openness and feel the love grow.*

Jean Anthony, SC Associate for 3 years

*Our annual Associate retreat is my way of renewing my commitment to being an Associate. It is during this time that I truly feel part of the Sisters of Charity family. Each retreat is better than the previous one and I am truly grateful for them.*

Diane McEntee, SC Associate for 6 years

*"Listen with the ear of your heart" is a favorite mantra of mine. Our retreat time this year gave listening a special focus. Listening became a prayer woven throughout our gathering – one of reflection, sharing, openness to one another and the Word of God. This openness to the Spirit was indeed a hope-filled time.*

Ann M. Magner, SC Associate for 15 years

\* Published by Berrett-Koehler; © 2002, 150 pages in paperback

*It is always with great anticipation that I look forward to our Associate retreat. Our time at Stanfordville was quite special this year. Under the gentle guidance of Sr. Mary Mc Cormick, we shared conversations with each other that brought us closer to our beloved Elizabeth, Vincent and Louise. Our sharing with each other deepened the bond that has been growing during our times together.*

Chris Gallagher, SC Associate for 3 years



*When one Associate talks, the others listen. From left, Margaret Comaskey, Chris Gallagher and Connie Velez.*

*The theme of our retreat was so appropriate! We spent our time together turning to one another in conversation, shared prayer, reflections and, oh yes, laughter. The art of listening was alive and well and as we prayed in the words of Elizabeth, Louise and Vincent, we rejoiced in being part of this wonderful Company of Charity.*

Kathleen Skinner, SC Associate for 2 years

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



Associate relationship with the Sisters of Charity of New York offers women – and men – who affirm our mission a way to join with us in living out the Charity Charism within their own vocation and lifestyle.

If you are interested in learning more about this program, contact Sr. Mary Gallagher. See the back page for phone number and mailing address.

# Holiday Memories

*It shouldn't surprise anyone that Sisters who taught children and decorated classrooms know how to observe holidays.*

## Halloween at Mount Saint Vincent Convent



*The Sisters knew how to dress for success.*

*Guess who? (Answer below.)*



*From left, Sisters Mary Jane Fitzgibbon, Mary Lou McGrath and Elaine Owens.*

*Answer: That's Sr. Loretto John Meehan dressed as a clown.*

## Christmas at the Sisters of Charity Center

*Sr. Alice Darragh of Administrative Services shows one of the many Christmas cards that came in to the Congregation. They graced the display case in the reception area.*



### Congratulations, it's a llama!

One of the more unusual Christmas cards received was the one announcing that a llama would be given in the Congregation's name to a struggling family in South America. One of our benefactors kindly arranged this through Heifer International (HI).

HI provides livestock and training so families can earn extra income to improve the lives of their children. Each family who gets an animal promises to give one or more of its offspring to another family in need.

Farmers on the high Andean plateau depend on llamas as pack animals and as a source for wool fiber. The hardy animals survive on twigs and moss and their padded feet are gentle on easily eroded mountain slopes.



*For Christmas, the staff at the Sisters of Charity Center decorated offices, circulated weekly prayers for Advent, and collected materials for the less fortunate, including 10 large bags of toys. These were distributed to families at the Sisters of Charity Multi-Service Center, Casa Cecilia and Seton House – which are all sponsored works of SCNY – as well as to agencies connected with New York City.*

**BOOK REVIEW**

## Lead, Kindly Light: My Journey To Rome

By Thomas Howard / © 2004, Ignatius Press / 105 pages in paperback

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**by Sr. Yolanda De Mola**

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In this book, Dr. Thomas Howard recounts the fascinating spiritual journey that led to his conversion to Catholicism. He is a prolific writer known for his studies of C.S. Lewis and Charles Williams, and for books such as *Evangelical is Not Enough* and *On Being Catholic*.

This book's title is from 1833 writings by John Henry Newman, the Anglican priest who became a Catholic and, eventually, a Cardinal. When he was in a state of great indecision about his own faith, Newman wrote what would become a hymn under that name.

Howard was raised in a prominent Evangelical home. (His sister is a well-known author and former missionary Elisabeth Elliot.) He felt something was missing though and, at age 25, he joined the Anglican Church whose Elizabethan Prayer Book, Gothic building and seraphic music appealed to him.

Eventually, Howard was attracted to the antiquity of the Catholic Church and her authority. It had its Augustine and Aquinas; Francis and Dominic. He took its variety – the

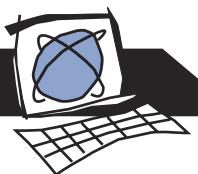
Church in Poland, Ireland and Mexico, etc. – as a sign of vigorous life. The Church of Rome represented order, discipline, piety and unity. No one needed to remain in doubt.

His denominational uncertainty became painfully evident when his wife turned to him in their church one day and said, "You're not here anymore, are you?"

During a visit to a Spanish mission chapel in Carmel, CA, where the Blessed Sacrament was reserved, Howard could not pray "make me a Catholic," but demurred with Newman's words "Lead, kindly light." He became a Catholic in 1985 at the age of 50. His wife joined him in the faith ten years later.

Howard concludes his autobiographical account with, "Every yearning, hope and desire that marks my life as an earnest Protestant Evangelical and then Anglican, has been fulfilled a thousand times over as a Catholic." ■

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

**WEB REVIEW**

How do you separate the wheat from the chaff when you're online? Recommendations from trusted sources, such as the VISION staff, can help. Here are a few sites worth adding to your Favorites list.

A good website for legislative advocacy is **NETWORK**, a Catholic social justice lobby founded by 47 Sisters. It highlights women's and children's needs and issues affecting the poor. You'll find sample letters that can easily be sent electronically just by entering your name/address/zip at [www.networklobby.org](http://www.networklobby.org)

*Sr. Claire E. Regan, SC*

It may not cover everything you'd ever want to know about Catholicism, but **New Advent** is chockfull of definitions of terms, biographies of saints, and the Bible itself. You can even listen to Fulton Sheen Radio there. You could spend hours, and learn lots, at [www.newadvent.org](http://www.newadvent.org)

*Chris Haggerty*

# Your Legacy: a Better Tomorrow

by Bill Hurley

Recently, we have had an increase in the number of benefactors inquiring how they can contribute to the Sisters of Charity through a Planned Gift. These endowments may be in the form of a bequest, a charitable gift annuity, donation of real estate, a life estate agreement or a trust.

An organized approach to estate planning can bring answers to what may otherwise be a confusing and overwhelming task. In order to give you as much information as possible, our Development Office will be initiating two educational components during the first quarter of 2007.

Our first component will be a special newsletter called *Insights*. The inaugural issue will discuss estate planning and how to decide what's best for you and your family. We also will clarify some misconceptions about wills with general questions and answers.

We cannot afford to mail this material to everyone, but if you would like a copy and have not received one by the end of March, please call our office and we will place you on our mailing list. We hope to publish *Insights* three times a year.

Each issue of this newsletter will include a response card that you can return if you'd like a brochure with more information on the featured topic. Future articles will discuss how to continue your generosity beyond your lifetime, real costs

as related to gift of security, managing capital gains, and many other topics that hopefully will interest you.

Our second component involves adding a new section on planned giving to our web site. It covers ways to build your gift, the purpose of a financial advisor, mistakes to avoid, bequest language and lots more.

You can access this new section – “Other Ways to Give” – from our web page [www.scny.org/helpUs.html](http://www.scny.org/helpUs.html)

Our Sisters are very appreciative of all you do to assist them in both ministry and retirement. It is our hope that these new developments will help you in your gift planning. ■

*Bill Hurley has been Director of Development for nine years and an Associate for six years. Bill is a “Certified Fundraising Executive” (CFRE), and serves on the Board of the National Catholic Development Conference.*

Suggested wording for a will or a codicil to your will:



“I give to the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul of New York / 6301 Riverdale Avenue / Bronx NY 10471 (state the sum, the proceeds of your estate or the percentage you choose to contribute or otherwise describe securities or property) to be used for its general purposes.”

## Small Change Can Make a Big Change



In the lobby of the Congregation's administrative center – Le Gras Hall at Mount Saint Vincent – there's an empty plastic water jug into which visitors drop contributions to the ongoing campaign to renovate Mount Saint Vincent Convent.

We're not sure yet exactly how much money is in this 5 gallon jug so far – we're guessing a million 😊 – but we know it weighs 92 lbs. We plan to count the contents soon, before it gets any heavier. There are also coin jugs at two of our retirement facilities.

We think of the contents as pennies (nickels, dimes, quarters and bills) from heaven. Every bit counts and is appreciated. ■

## *In Memoriam*

### **Sr. Loyola Maria Willett • Educator / Health Care / Administrator • 11/29/1908 – 10/26/2006**

**Religious name: Loyola Maria • Entered: 1927 • Final vows: 1933**

Mary Willett was one of three children of immigrants. Her father was Canadian, her mother was Irish. The family lived in Manhattan and she graduated from St. Ignatius Loyola Elementary School and Blessed Sacrament H.S.

Sister's first ministry was education. She began her teaching career at the Academy of Mount Saint Vincent in the Bronx. That was followed by 12 years at St. Gabriel Elementary School in New Rochelle.

Sr. Loyola had earned a BA in Science at the College of Mount Saint Vincent, but in the fall of 1942, nine months after Pearl Harbor, she went back to school and became a medical technician. Upon graduation, she embarked on what would be a 58-year association with St. Joseph's Hospital in Yonkers: 41 years as Supervisor of Laboratories, followed by 16 years as Billing Coordinator. She retired from St. Joseph's at age 95.

Sister loved the opera and theater. When she couldn't get to live performances any more, she still enjoyed her favorites on tape. She deeply felt the loss of her sister in 1979 who was also in the Congregation – Sr. Mary Macrina. Sr. Loyola was age 98 when she died and had served faithfully as a Sister of Charity of New York for 79 years.

### **Sr. Mary Landy • Educator / Health Care • 10/2/1917 – 12/10/2006**

**Religious name: Sr. Maria Ignatius • Entered: 1943 • Final vows: 1949**

Mary Landy grew up in the Yorkville section of Manhattan, the middle child of five. She attended St. Joseph's Elementary School and Cathedral H.S. She earned a BA in English at the College of Mount Saint Vincent, a MA in History from Fordham University, and pursued post graduate studies in theology at Manhattan College and supervision and administration at Hunter College.

Her 35-year ministry in education began in 1943 at St. Elizabeth Seton School, Yonkers. Subsequent assignments included St. Agatha Elementary School in Nanuet, where Sister was twice Principal, and at Cathedral H.S. and Holy Cross Academy, both in Manhattan. After that, Sister returned to Cathedral where she chaired the social studies department for 13 years.

At an age when many people retire, Sister began a new ministry. She served for a total of 15 years at St. Vincent Hospital in Manhattan: as a ward clerk, patient representative, and volunteer patient rep. Sister also served as a receptionist at St. Teresa's parish on Manhattan's Lower East Side in the mid-1980s. She retired when she was 84 years of age.

When asked once how she wanted to be remembered, Sr. Mary replied "as honest, reliable and concerned for others." That's easily done. We are grateful for her 63 years of service and 89 years of life.

### **Sr. Catherine Herlihy • Educator / Administrator • 2/8/1918 – 1/1/2007**

**Religious name: Sr. Regina Patrick • Entered: 1941 • Final vows: 1947**

Bronx-born Catherine Herlihy was one of ten children of Irish immigrants. She graduated from St. Raymond Elementary School and Cathedral H.S. and earned degrees in Math – a Bachelor's at the College of Mount Saint Vincent and a Master's at Fordham University.

Her 49-year ministry in schools was mostly at the secondary level. She taught at Cathedral H.S. (All Saints Branch), St. Lawrence Academy in Manhattan, Elizabeth Seton H.S. in Yonkers, St. Barnabas H.S. in the Bronx, and at Trinity H.S. in Shiremanstown, PA – the Diocese of Harrisburg – where she was also the Assistant Principal. Her students enjoyed her quick wit and humor. One remarked that "Sister Patrick made math fun!"

In 1970, Sister moved into school administration. She was Registrar at Elizabeth Seton College in Yonkers for 7 years, followed by 13 years as administrative assistant for Pupil Personnel Service at Cardinal Spellman H.S. in the Bronx. Poor health forced Sr. Catherine into early retirement at age 72. Since 1990, her ministry was prayer, service and witness at the Congregation's main retirement convent. Rest in peace, Sr. Catherine, after 66 years of committed ministry and 88 years of a life well lived.

# SEASONALITIES Calendar

## February

- 16-22: The Congregation held its Assembly 2007, "Meeting Our Grace," at Convent Station, NJ.
- 20: In 1810, Elizabeth Seton and the first Sisters in Emmitsburg moved from the Stone House to the new White House; first Mass is offered there.
- 22: The school ministry of the Sisters of Charity begins when the first pupils are received at the White House in Emmitsburg.

## March

- 11-29: Sr. Kathleen Aucoin's sculptures will be on display at the Mariandale Retreat and Conference Center in Ossining, NY.
- 16: The 2nd School Spirituality Day will be held for teachers of the Archdiocese.
- 16: In 1810, Elizabeth Boyle of Baltimore entered the Sisters of Charity in Emmitsburg.
- 25: In 1805, Elizabeth Seton received her First Communion.  
In 1809, Elizabeth Seton pronounced religious vows as a religious for 1 year before Archbishop John Carroll.
- 31: A celebratory program will be held at Hostos Community College in the Bronx for the Elizabeth Seton Women's Center, now in its 10th year.

## April

- 10-13: Sr. Dominica Rocchio will be presented the 2007 C. Albert Koob Award at the National Catholic Education Association Convention in Baltimore. Sister served for 14 years as the Secretary for Education/ Superintendent of Schools in the Archdiocese of Newark.
- 28-29: Congregation elects new leadership.

## Reflection

*"Let the little whistling, chilling wind blow above your head and blast nothing of your dear interior cheerfulness, your bright and hopeful look at eternity."*

**St. Elizabeth Ann Seton**

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