



SISTERS  
of CHARITY  
NEW YORK

# Vision

VOLUME 12, ISSUE 1, Winter 2007 / Early Spring 2008

## First Among Equals

by Chris Haggerty

As part of its Bicentennial Celebration, the Archdiocese of New York paid tribute to the religious sisters and brothers for their many contributions. Cardinal Egan was principal celebrant at the March 2nd Mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral; Bishop Robert Brucato and Bishop Gerald Walsh were the principal concelebrants that Sunday.

The Congregation was represented in the procession by Sr. Dorothy Metz, President, Sr. Donna Dodge, Assistant to the President, and Sisters Dominica Rocchio and Margaret O'Brien, both members of the Council. Many other Sisters of Charity filled the pews for the celebration.

The Mass program listed over 120 congregations serving in the Archdiocese today. The Sisters of Charity were singled out for special recognition because, in 1817, they became the first congregation of religious women to establish a permanent community in what was then the *Diocese* of New York. In recognition of this distinction, Sr. Dorothy Metz, President of the Congregation, gave the first reading.

During his homily, the Cardinal praised the religious sisters and brothers for their many contributions and sacrifices over two centuries. He told how the Sisters of Charity of Mount Saint Vincent volunteered in large numbers to replace the staff that abandoned patients in a Ward's Island hospital during an 1866 cholera epidemic. Within six weeks, the

five sisters chosen from many volunteers had the hospital in "apple pie order."

Several of our Sisters were interviewed by Mary Ann Proust of *Catholic New York* after the Mass. Their remarks appeared in the March 13th edition of the official archdiocesan newspaper. Sr. Eileen McGrory, Secretary of the Congregation, said "You could say we

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*Sr. Dorothy Metz in the pulpit at St. Patrick's Cathedral. She gave the first reading, from the first book of Samuel.*

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- Archdiocesan Bicentennial
- Sisters Still in Schools: Elementary, Secondary and College
- Student Activist
- New Faces
- Parish Tricentennial



## Letter from the President

Dear Sisters, Associates and Friends,

I recently read an article on the increase in the number of items people leave behind each year. Most often these articles are left in planes, buses and trains. They are not insignificant items either. Cell phones, iPods and cameras are among the priciest forgotten possessions. Despite all the timesaving devices we now use, we seem to be propelled into a state of constant motion and busyness, resulting in a loss of focus. The ideal of living simply eludes us.

A few days later I had a completely different experience. I observed the actors during the filming of the movie, *Doubt*. Their focus "off camera" helped me to appreciate how they can portray such a range of emotions when they are "on camera." It is only by being so focused that they become the characters they are portraying.

These ponderings carried over into my prayer. Perhaps we can offset our excessive busyness by being more intentional about the time we do have. How do we wish to live our lives? How well are we living in right relationship with God, with others and with all of creation?

St. Paul urges us to "let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." While excessive busyness certainly militates against that kind of mindfulness, taking the time and space to be with Christ in prayer is a prerequisite to having that focus of which St. Paul speaks. Prayer takes effort and commitment on our part but, in the end, it is God who seals the relationship.

The fruit of prayer is more than the absence of busyness. It is a peacefulness born of the knowledge that we are open to whatever we encounter in our daily lives. This "Yes" is born from saying "Yes" to God on a regular basis. Then we are able to see goodness in and around ourselves. Our relationship with God is mirrored in all our other relationships. There is a ripple effect as God's presence in our lives moves into every area of life. Our efforts to focus "off camera" will lead to a God-centered life "on camera."

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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*We are most grateful to the following for providing the photographs used on p. 12:*

*St. Vincent's Hospital, Manhattan (Sr. Marianne Robertson) and Linda Morales / Lincoln Medical & Mental Health Center (Sr. Mary Regina Caulfield).*

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

## First Among Equals *(continued from page 1)*



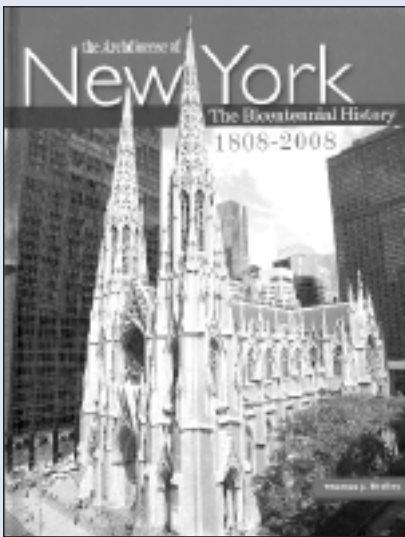
*A Charity contingent from St. Vincent's Hospital, Manhattan, fills a pew at the Cathedral. From left, Sisters Mary T. Boyle, Grace Henke, Audrey Boylan, Angelica Marie Troy, and Miriam Kevin Phillips. That's Sr. Doris Heinlein in the rear, reading the program.*

In 1808, the diocese included all New York State and the northern part of New Jersey. There were only six or seven priests and three churches to care for roughly 15,000 Catholics. Today, the same area encompasses two archdioceses, nine dioceses, 6,000 priests, 2,000 churches and over 11 million Catholics. There are 2,911 sisters and 368 brothers serving in the Archdiocese of New York these days.

grew up with the diocese.” Sr. Mary Christine Rogers told of her diverse ministries over 58 years and how the Sisters of Charity “tried to meet the needs of society. We’re very flexible, we take risks.”

Sr. Janet Baxendale is on the 17-person planning committee for Archdiocesan Bicentennial events, which included this celebration. She will be involved in planning other occasions, including the April visit of Pope Benedict XVI. Sister is Professor of Liturgy at Saint Joseph’s Seminary (Dunwoodie). She also serves as an advisor to the Committee on the Liturgy for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. For twenty-six years, she served as Director of the Liturgy Office of the Archdiocese. ■

## 200 Years in 600 Pages



Have you gotten your copy yet of *The Bicentennial History of the Archdiocese of New York, 1808–2008*? It’s a most impressive tome, written by Msgr. Thomas Shelley, PhD, professor of historical theology at Fordham University. Sr. Rita King, the Congregation’s Archivist, was consulted on the sections about the Sisters of Charity of New York. She and Sisters Jean Iannone, Catherine Walsh, and Monica Wood are credited in the Acknowledgements section for their contributions to this massive undertaking.

The book is a great achievement, and a great value at only \$30. It’s a rare page that doesn’t have at least one illustration. To get your own copy, contact your parish.

Although it’s impressive, the Bicentennial History book is not perfect. The index doesn’t list *all* the pages on which there are references to the Sisters of Charity of New York. Sr. Rita King went through it and compiled this more complete

index. The pages in **bold face** are the ones *not* noted in the book’s index: **6, 72, 89, 96, 106, 108, 125, 206, 298, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 357, 362, 363, 364, 365, 367, 375, 376, 381, 383, 420, 464, 530, 587, 611, and 616.** ■

# Sisters Make the Grade During School Visits

**by Sr. Anne Denise Brennan & Sr. Charlotte Raftery**

Teams of Sisters put aside their current ministries for a few days in January to go back to grade school: for the feast day of Elizabeth Ann Seton and for Catholic Schools Week.

For the January 4th feast day, Sisters visited parochial schools with long and strong ties to St. Elizabeth and her New York Congregation. They told Pre-K through 8th graders about Mother Seton's New York roots and how she began a school that was the seed of the Catholic School system.



*Sr. Margaret's statue of Mother Seton.*

Sisters Audrey Boylan, Anne Denise Brennan, Mary Carmel Craig and Marguerite Mahony spent the morning of January 3rd at **St. Adalbert School** on Staten Island. Principal Diane Hesterhagen, who is a devotee of St. Elizabeth, was delighted to receive Sr. Margaret Beaudette's statue of Mother Seton with a young girl holding a book.

On January 4th, the actual feast day, Sisters were at **St. Patrick School**, on Mott Street in lower Manhattan, which holds the distinction of being New York's oldest parochial school. It was established in 1822 by the first Sisters of Charity in the city.

Sr. Mary E. Mc Cormick spoke about Mother Seton at 9am Mass, and told 5th to 8th graders about Mother Elizabeth Boyle at assembly later in the day. (Mother Boyle was elected the first Mother General of the New York Congregation in 1846, when it separated from the one in Emmitsburg.)

In the audience were several dignitaries representing the Archdiocesan Department of Education: Dr. Catherine Hickey, the Secretary for Education; Sr. Mary Kilmartin, SC, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum for Secondary Education; Sr. Winifred Lyons, SC, Assistant Superintendent of Pro-Life Activities; and Dr. Mary Jane (Hardiman) Krebbs, Associate Secretary for Education.

During the day, a new Pre-K classroom at St. Patrick's was dedicated and named in honor of Elizabeth Boyle. A statue of Mother Boyle, sculpted by Sr. Kathleen Aucoin, SC, was presented as a gift from the Congregation.



*Sr. Kathleen's statue of Mother Boyle.*

Sr. Mary Aquin Flaherty (who sometimes "subs" at St. Patrick's), Sr. Helen Scoltock (who formerly taught there), and Sisters Audrey Boylan, Grace Henke, Jane Hoehn, Teresa Kelly, Rita Nowatzki, Francis Sabara, Joanne Ward, and Genevieve Wetmore, spent time with the children in their classrooms. They talked about the lives of the two Elizabeths, Seton and Boyle, and the history of the Congregation at St. Patrick's through 19 decades.

On the same day, Sisters Anne Denise Brennan and Regina Michael Lowe participated in the Liturgy with the student body of **St. Augustine School** in the Bronx. Fr. Thomas Fenlon reminded all of the 100 years-plus association of the Congregation with his parish and its school. At his invitation, Sr. Anne Denise talked about Elizabeth Ann Seton and expressed the hope that young women would continue to follow in the saint's footsteps.

Later in the month, Sisters went back to four other schools for Catholic Schools Week, January 27 – February 2. The theme of this year's observation was "*Catholic Schools Light the Way*." Think of all the Sisters of Charity who lit the way for so many students, at all grade levels, over the years.

On Sunday, January 27, at the request of the school's Director of Religious Education, Sisters Anne Denise Brennan and Sheila Finucane visited the Confirmation class at the Church of **The Immaculate Conception** in Woodbourne, Sullivan County. Using a segment of the Congregation's video *The Sisters of Charity Today* as a focal point, they spoke of Elizabeth Seton, Vincent de Paul and their own vocation stories.



The next day, Sr. Anne Denise represented the Congregation at a Vocation Awareness Assembly at **Saint Benedict's Prep** in Newark, NJ. Grades 7-12 of the Prep and grade 8 of the parish school – all young men – were present. Why were we invited by Brother Patrick Winbush, O.S.B., Director of Vocations? Young men need to know about Sisters, too!

On Tuesday, **Saint Anthony School**, on Matilda Avenue in the north Bronx, celebrated Catholic Schools Week by focusing on the life of Elizabeth Ann Seton and vocations to the Sisters of Charity. Sisters Constance Brennan, Pauline Cinquini, Kathleen Doherty, Mary Ann Donovan, Nancy Kellar, Rita King, Mary Ellen McGovern, Joy Pellegrino, Charlotte Raftery and Kathleen Sullivan participated in the day's activities. They were joined by Associate Roberta Lener and by Sr. Jeannette Chishibanji, X.M.M., the Archdiocesan Catechetical Regional Director for the Bronx.



*Sr. Kathleen Sullivan with some young scholars at St. Anthony School in the Bronx.*

Sisters Pauline Cinquini and Nancy Kellar told Assembly programs for grades K-8 about the life of Elizabeth Ann Seton and gave testimony about God's call to religious life. Other Sisters visited individual classes at the school. The day was enlivened by music, song and an inspirational prayer service in which all participated. The students and teachers were most responsive, and everyone – Sisters especially – had an enjoyable day.



*Sisters Charlotte Raftery, Rita King and M. Ellen McGovern enjoy the assembly program at St. Anthony.*

Thursday was a wonderful homecoming at **Saint Peter's**, Haverstraw, for Sisters Anne Denise Brennan, Jean Iannone, Winifred Lyons, Ann Reynolds, Theresa Rybarik, Katherine Seibert and Catherine Walsh. They were warmly welcomed by Principal Margaret Hamilton, an old friend. Visits were made to Pre-K-2 classrooms; assemblies were held for grades 3-8. The Sisters spoke of the fact that each person has a call from God, then shared the story of their personal vocations. The students asked great questions and were very responsive to our visit.

The Sisters were very appreciative of all who made the visits to the schools possible, especially the Sisters who planned the agendas and created/organized materials for distribution to students. For example, Sr. Jean Iannone, Director of Information Systems for the Congregation, produced hundreds of copies of the *Mother Seton Coloring Book* for distribution to younger students. ■

*Sr. Anne Denise Brennan is Formation / Novice Director for the Congregation and is Professor Emerita of English at the College of Mount Saint Vincent. Sr. Charlotte Raftery is Candidate Director in New York for the Congregation and also is Faculty Advisor at the Fordham University Graduate School of Social Services.*

# Seton Solidarity on Staten Island

by Sr. Regina Bechtle

Prominent among the many New York sites associated with Elizabeth Seton is the Episcopal Church of Saint Andrew in central Staten Island. It was founded in 1708 and Elizabeth's maternal grandfather served as its pastor for thirty years.

For its 300th anniversary year, the present rector, Rev. Michael Delaney, wanted to honor Elizabeth Seton. In true Sister of Charity "can-do" fashion, our own Sr. Mary E. Mc Cormick organized a program entitled, "A Time to Gather, Remember, Celebrate."

About 70 people – sisters, lay associates and friends from local Catholic and Episcopal parishes – attended the January 19th event. They were treated to presentations by representatives from four congregations of Elizabeth's daughters. The day also included a Mass celebrated by Rev. Aidan Rooney, a Vincentian priest.

Sisters Mary E. Mc Cormick, SCNY, and Maryann Seton Lopiccolo, SC-Halifax, reflected on Elizabeth's love for those living in poverty, and spoke of numerous places in the tri-state area where her followers continue her legacy of care for the poor.

Sisters Regina Bechtle, SCNY, and Kathleen Flanagan, SCNJ, showed how Elizabeth's experience of church as a home impels us to make our churches places of welcome, and to

work to promote unity among Christians – an especially significant message in this 100th anniversary of the annual Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.



*From left, Sisters Kathleen Flanagan, Mary Ann Daly, Germaine Price, Regina Bechtle, Maryann Seton Lopiccolo, and Mary E. Mc Cormick gave presentations.*

Sr. Mary Ann Daly, SCNY, noted that Elizabeth's life experiences taught her that, as a "citizen of the world," there are many different ways to see reality. Sr. Germaine Price, DC-St. Louis, MO, described how the Charity family, with a Non-Government Organization representative at the United Nations, speaks with and for the poor with a people-centered, global perspective.

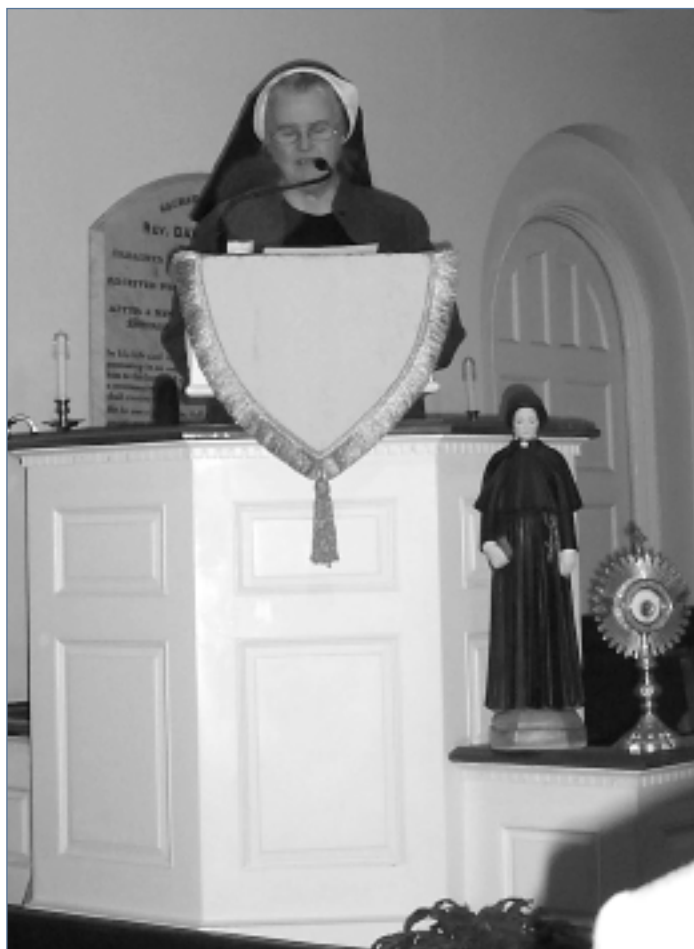


*Sisters Mary Ellen O'Boyle, Vivienne Joyce, Rita Nowatzki and Kathleen Aucoin (front, left to right) were among the several dozen Sisters of Charity of New York who enjoyed the program.*

Fr. Delaney gave a tour of the historic church and proudly pointed out Elizabeth Seton's image in a contemporary All Saints icon. Other treasures include the 1713 church charter given by Queen Anne along with a silver chalice.

A typical reaction to the occasion was this by Sr. Mary Kay Finneran, SCNY, who found it: "A wonderful day! I felt great energy, enjoyed the diversity of congregations present, and appreciated the chance to listen to new perspectives on Elizabeth Seton and her heritage."

St. Andrew's Episcopal Church describes itself as "steeped in history yet open to hear God's call to vision into the future" – just like Elizabeth and the women who have followed her in the way of Charity. ■



*Sr. Anne Denise Brennan read the Prayers of the Faithful during the Mass.*

## Save the Date: Thursday, May 8th



See the back page for information about our first Spring Benefit. It will be held at the Yale Club in midtown. Proceeds will benefit various SC ministries.

## The Seton / St. Andrew Connection

The quaint stone steepled church in Richmondtown looks serene and welcoming. Its rustic cemetery and meandering brook contrast with the cars that whip around the corner of a now-busy intersection in one of the Island's oldest parts.

St. Andrew's Episcopal Church has been a center of worship, community and service for 300 years. For more than 250 of them, this historic parish has been closely linked with the family of St. Elizabeth Ann Bayley Seton.



Elizabeth's maternal grandfather, the Rev. Richard Charlton, came as a missionary to the then-British colonies. He was known for his social concern, which included providing catechism classes for African and Caribbean

blacks. Rev. Charlton served St. Andrew's as pastor from 1747 until his death in 1777.

During the Revolutionary War, the church was a hospital and headquarters for British soldiers. Although Elizabeth was only three when Rev. Charlton died – the same year as her mother (his daughter) Catherine Charlton – she may well have visited her grandparents on Staten Island.

After Elizabeth's marriage, she and her children spent several happy summers at the quarantine station begun by her father, Dr. Richard Bayley, Health Officer of the Port of New York. This was in Tompkinsville, the northwest section of Staten Island, where Bayley Seton Hospital would later be. Elizabeth often wrote of watching ships pass through the Narrows and out to sea beyond Sandy Hook.

In August, 1801, Dr. Bayley died of yellow fever from working with poor immigrants just off the ships. Fearing plague, Staten Islanders would not allow his body to be carried overland. Elizabeth arranged for a barge to transport her father's remains via Fresh Kills Creek to St. Andrew's, where he was laid to rest. Elizabeth's father, sister and brother-in-law, with her Charlton grandparents, are buried in a specially marked plot in the parish cemetery at St. Andrew's Church.



# One in a Million

*Exclusively for Vision, Sr. Regina Bechtle interviewed Marissa Rega, a senior at the College of Mount Saint Vincent (CMSV), about her work for Middle East peace. Marissa's aunt, Sr. Mary Ann D'Antonio, is a Sister of Charity of New York and principal of St. Raymond Academy for Girls in the Bronx.*

At CMSV, Marissa became involved in the OneVoice campaign, a worldwide movement to promote peace in the Middle East. The year-long campaign launched on October 12, 2007 with a "People's Summit." The goal is to get 1 million people — Israelis, Palestinians and others — to sign its mandate calling for immediate, ongoing negotiations toward peace, by December 12, 2008. (As of March, 640,750 signatures had been collected.) Signers want to press their elected representatives to sit down and negotiate a two-state solution.



*Marissa Rega with her aunt Sr. Mary Ann D'Antonio, SC.*

Last October 18th, OneVoice sought to mobilize hundreds of thousands of Palestinians and Israelis at People's Summits in Jericho and Tel Aviv, linked via satellite with parallel events in London, Ottawa, and Washington, DC. The goal was to have ordinary citizens speak out in unprecedented numbers against violent extremism and demand that their leaders begin negotiations.

I organized a group of ten from the Mount to go to the Washington, DC rally. Many

more were interested but couldn't attend. Unfortunately, due to security threats in Jericho, all the rallies were cancelled. I didn't find out until the night before. However, the OneVoice organization still conducted a meeting in DC, and I took a group of students to that conference, which discussed the issues facing the Middle East and ways to handle them.

The campaign seeks to support the moderate majority who want to end the occupation, to permanently end all forms of violence, and to achieve international recognition, respect, peace and prosperity for both sides. Honorary board members include many notable figures such as Mary Robinson, former President of Ireland.

## **Marissa, how did you get interested in the issue of Israeli-Palestinian peace?**

My friend from high school goes to Georgetown University. She's from Kashmir, and since I've known her, she's been interested in the Middle East. I belong to the International Students' Association on campus at CMSV. It's a group that welcomes diversity and celebrates cultures. It seemed like the perfect group to get involved with this issue.

## **Can you tell me more about the OneVoice campaign? How are students responding to this issue?**

Conflict between Israel and Palestine has been around such a long time that some people think peace is hopeless. But it's not.

**The College of Mount Saint Vincent was the first women's college in New York City. It evolved out of the Academy of Mount Saint Vincent, which the Sisters of Charity had established in 1847. The Academy offered higher education for women in the decades before colleges and universities were open to them. Its graduates, including many Sisters of Charity, went on to careers of extraordinary achievement and service. The MSV campus in the northwest Bronx is still home to both the Sisters and the College.**



There were about 40 at the Washington conference. We talked about next steps, about how our group might have more presence and impact, about getting support using the Internet. Getting our message across to the leaders in the Middle East is key. We want to keep working at it, and we don't want to give up. Overall it was a hopeful message.

### **Does our country have a role in promoting peace in the Middle East?**

Yes, we need to get our leaders to put pressure on their leaders, the same as we're trying to do in Darfur. Both sides in the Mideast have committed wrongs. It's not about taking sides but about fostering relationships.

### **I agree. That's such a powerful strategy. Does that affect the way you personally approach problems?**

I'm a journalist, so I try to see both sides of a story, try to get all the information. When I have to solve problems with my students, I always make them say how they perceive the other person to be. Sr. Margaret [Egan] teaches us that [in her CMSV education class] – to make "I" statements.

### **Tell me a bit about yourself, your family, your interests.**

My family lives in Toledo, Ohio, where I attended an all-girls Catholic high school. My parents are from the Bronx, where both my older sister and I live now. I spent a semester studying in Lugano, Switzerland, and had the chance to travel in Europe. I'm only fluent in English, but I can get by in German and Italian.

I especially liked visiting the former Yugoslavia. When I was growing up, the conflict in Bosnia was always in the news, so actually being there was surreal. The people are really hardworking; they've come through so much. It's a real testament to the human spirit.

I'm very passionate about student teaching. My original plan was to go into journalism after graduation, but I really love teaching third grade. I'll be certified to teach first through sixth grade.

I write for *The MounTimes* [the CMSV campus newspaper] and worked for Minor League Baseball's website. I joined the International Students' Association in my freshman year. Many of our members were born outside the U.S. but have grown up here. We have members from Thailand, the Philippines, Africa, the Mideast, and the U.S. Our major

**Sisters of Charity of New York had a deep connection with Israel-Palestine through two of our members. From 1982 to 1987, Sr. Mary Elizabeth Earley taught English at Bethlehem University on the West Bank and also served as local contact for the pilgrimages led by Sr. Eileen Storey. With her knowledge of the Scriptures and of the Hebrew and Arabic languages, her reverence for the religions and cultures of the Middle East, and her wealth of personal contacts, Sr. Eileen was able to give pilgrims first-hand contact with real Israelis, Palestinians, Armenians and others who call the Holy Land home. Both Sisters are now deceased, but their love for the land where Jesus walked lives on in the many people who traveled its roads with them.**

event is Cultural Night in the spring, with ethnic music, dance and food.

### **What can readers of *Vision* do to help?**

1. Sign the OneVoice mandate on the website, at [www.onemillionvoices.org](http://www.onemillionvoices.org)
2. If you're already committed to the issue, motivate more people to get involved.
3. Do something on a small scale.

**That approach is so hopeful, Marissa. You believe there's always another way. You don't give up on the Spirit, on the possibility that something new can happen.**

That's my view as a teacher, too, Sister – believing that there's always something new to discover with my students, a fresh perspective. ■

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

# A New Season of Hope: Bridge Building

Sr. Joy Pellegrino initiated 40 young women into the Bridge Building Program in October. This began a new school year of activities with young women from St. Raymond Academy for Girls and St. Barnabas High School. Both schools are in the Bronx and both also have long and strong ties to the Sisters of Charity of New York.



*Sr. Joy Pellegrino is in the back, just right of center, in this group of Bridge Builders from St. Raymond Academy.*

The Congregation sponsors the Bridge Building faith formation program which enables students to experience the spirit of charity through site visits and theological reflection sessions. It is in its fourth year of operation.



*The Bridge Building cross.*

The *Ritual of Installation*, which is the formal initiation into Bridge Building, focused on the person of Elizabeth Ann Seton. The rite is designed to help students understand the charism of charity as exemplified in the life and ministry of Elizabeth and its relationship to the experiences they will encounter in the Bridge Building Program. During the rite, each young woman was called forth by name and received a wooden cross which she is asked to wear during monthly visits to sites where Sisters of Charity minister.

## Meeting the Challenge

You may be smarter than a 5th grader, but how about a 12th grader?

Five seniors from Saint Raymond Academy for Girls competed in two rounds of Cable Channel 12's show *The Challenge*, an advanced academic competition that tests students' knowledge of history, arts and literature, math and science.

Three of these young women also are participants in the Bridge Building program.

In their online game profiles, the St. Raymond scholars cited their biggest dreams. Tunisia Mitchell's was "To learn as much as I can ... and to be in service (to) others." Eileen Griffin's was "... to live my life in a position where I am able to help others daily." Maxiel Peralta "love(s) to help others." Stephanie Marchena named Elizabeth Ann Seton as her role model.

Even though these 17-year olds didn't make it to the end of the competition, they certainly are winners for their values. Sr. Mary Ann D'Antonio, Principal of St. Raymond, and Sr. Joy Pellegrino, Director of the Bridge Building Program, have much to be proud of. You can learn more about St. Raymond's Challenge team at <http://www.powertolearn.com/challenge/bb/teams2.shtml?79>

The Challenge airs every Saturday and Sunday through June 2008 at 6:30pm and 9:30pm on Cablevision's News 12, the largest and most watched regional news network in the tri-state area. This season, over 750 students from more than 150 high schools are vying for the championship – and the \$10,000 grand prize that will go to the winning team's school. ■

# Bienvenidas! Welcome!

by **Sr. Anne Denise Brennan**

Among many exciting developments in the Congregation's New Membership office, was the addition of two new members to the Formation Team:

- Sr. Maria Iglesias works on vocation ministry in New York and Guatemala.
- Sr. Charlotte Raftery is Candidate Director in New York.

Sr. Maria brings to Vocation Ministry a lifetime of commitment to service among the poor, especially in the South Bronx and Atlantic City, NJ. She has been an educator, a hospital pastoral counselor and an administrator for a community hospital clinic.

Nationally and internationally with RENEW, Sr. Maria was a consultant and developed spiritual programs in Spanish and English. She has trained teams in over 84 dioceses across the U.S. in their use.

Most recently, she was Pastoral Associate at Our Lady of Grace in Hoboken, NJ. This parish was dedicated by Elizabeth Seton's nephew, Bishop Bayley, in 1851 and was among the first served by the Sisters of Charity of Convent Station.

Sr. Maria received an MA in Education from Antioch University during her year of study at the Mexican American Cultural Center in San Antonio, TX. This provided a solid theological base for ministry in the United States and Latin America.

Sister was a strong advocate, both as a member of the New York Archdiocesan Advisory Council for Hispanic Catholics, and through her national leadership with *Las Hermanas* (The Sisters). She served with the World Council of Churches' "Theology of the Americas," and was its USA representative in international events in Sao Paulo, Brazil and Havana, Cuba.

Once again Sr. Maria will transfer her skills, helping to develop the culture of vocation among our Sisters,

Associates and numerous groups both here and in Guatemala. Her passion and contagious enthusiasm stem from belief in God's call to both young, and not so young, women today.

Sr. Charlotte Raftery comes to the team with 18 years in ministry with the economically marginalized at Little Sisters Family Health Service in East Harlem. There she

advocated that families, especially women and children, empower themselves. She continues this advocacy role for families in her current ministry as Faculty Advisor at the Fordham University Graduate School of Social Services.

Sr. Charlotte holds an MA in Religious Education from The Catholic University of America, an MS Ed in Pastoral Counseling from Iona College, and an MSW from Hunter College School of Social Work. She has

taught in elementary and high schools, and has been Religious Education Director in parishes. For many years, Sister was a member of the Congregation's Associate Team and was formerly a member of the Formation Team.

As Candidate Director, Sr. Charlotte will assist the women entering the Congregation in determining their ministry and community living group. She will help them discern their call to be Sisters of Charity of New York. She hopes "that women who are called by God will discover in us, the Sisters of Charity, the spirit and embodiment of our 2007 Direction Statement," which challenges us to "do justice, love tenderly and walk humbly with our God."

We look forward to God's working in us and through us. We ask for your prayers. ■



*Sisters Maria Iglesias and Charlotte Raftery.*

*Inquires about vocations can be directed to  
718-543-4898 or [newmemoff@scny.org](mailto:newmemoff@scny.org)*



## Honors and Happenings



**Sr. Marianne Robertson**, who is Nursing Administration Coordinator at St. Vincent's Hospital, Manhattan, was honored at the hospital's annual Angelus Award Gala on October 26. She received the *Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton Award* which is presented to the Sister of Charity who emulates Mother Seton as an advocate for the sick, the poor and the abandoned.

Sr. Marianne's association with St. Vincent's Hospital started in Westchester, where, as a lay registered nurse, she cared for the mentally ill. After joining the Congregation, she was assigned to St. Vincent's Hospital, Manhattan, as a staff nurse in the Reiss Pavilion. After that, Sister Marianne was appointed to the Faculty of St. Vincent's Hospital School of Nursing, once teaching classes exceeding 160 students. In all, Sr. Marianne has been affiliated with St. Vincent's for 47 years.



**Sr. Mary Regina Caulfield** was honored upon her retirement as Director of Volunteer Services at Lincoln Medical and Mental Health Center in the South Bronx. An article in *Network Review*, the newsletter for the NYC Health & Hospitals Corp., recapped her 30 years of service at Lincoln, and cited her "extraordinary spirit of courage, compassion and love of

mankind" and her "unyielding devotion to patients and staff alike." In addition to recruiting, training, retaining and encouraging volunteers, Sister coordinated the Annual Health Fair, and the holiday collection and distribution of toys for pediatrics. Sister will continue to volunteer at Lincoln, but will have more time now for home visits at her parish, Holy Name in New Rochelle.

**Sr. Trudé Collins** was recognized on October 16 by Immigrant Social Services on the Lower East Side for her 45 years of work in St. Athanasius Parish. In addition, she received the Spirit of Community Award from Unitas Therapeutic Community of the South Bronx in recognition of her work as chair of the the Simpson Street Development Assn.

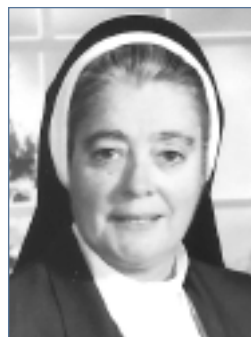
*Two of our Sisters who celebrated their Golden Jubilees last September, received extra honors from elected officials in Yonkers, the city on the Hudson where they have served for many years.*



**Sr. Theresa Luciano** was honored with a day of her own by Yonkers' Mayor Philip Amicone on October 5th. In his proclamation at St. Mary's Church, Amicone praised Sr. Theresa for the "many lives she has touched, nurtured and changed during the past fifty years." He recognized all the religious institutions in

Yonkers, but especially "the beloved Sisters of Charity."

Sr. Theresa is one of Yonkers' own. Her Italian immigrant parents owned and operated a candy store in the city's downtown area. Since 1989, Sister has taught at St. Mary's School, where she is known as an innovative and effective religious educator.



**Sr. Mary Kieran Mulligan** was honored with a surprise assembly on September 14th at St. Anthony School in Yonkers, where she has taught since 2000. The day's festivities began with a prayer service led by the parish priests; then, each class presented Sister with posters, cards, flowers and a basket filled with gifts.

In October, St. Anthony Parish hosted a day celebrating 170 years of Church Ministry. At it, the Mayor and City Council of Yonkers honored Sr. Kieran for her 50 years of religious life, and the priests of the parish for their devoted service, too. After Mass, there was a celebration in the school hall at which each honoree received a proclamation from the city. Both the Church and the school hall were filled to overflowing.

### Sisters on the Go

**Sr. Rosemary O'Donnell** took part in the January 22nd March for Life in Washington, DC. Over 40 buses from the Archdiocese of New York made the trip to protest the 35th anniversary of legalized abortion in the US. Sister was part of the delegation from her parish, St. Joseph's in



Yonkers. A few days later, Sr. Rosemary wrote a letter to the *New York Times* to register how “appalled” she was that the paper did not mention the event at all. She is still waiting to hear the editors’ reasons for not covering the story.

**Sr. Nancy McNamara** represented the Congregation in the procession at the January 20th installation of the new pastor at St. Margaret of Cortona in the Bronx. Sister was principal at St. Margaret’s parish school for two years and also taught CCD there. She has known Fr. Brian P. McCarthy for years, from when she was principal at St. Barnabas elementary school. Sr. Nancy said that, from working with the Sisters over the years, Fr. McCarthy is “strongly charity minded.” The Sisters of Charity had staffed St. Margaret’s School since opening it in 1926.



**Sisters Marie Morris, Catherine Smith and Florence Mallon** were among the Sisters who took part in the “For the Children” Walk-a-thon on October 6th at Tibbetts Brook Park in Yonkers. This annual event benefits the programs at the John A. Coleman School at the Child-ren’s Rehabilitation Center in White Plains, where Sr. Ellen Rose O’Connell is the Director of Mission Integration /

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Pastoral Care. Sisters Carol Barnes, Regina Bechtle, Margaret Egan and Suzanne Wallin also walked that day. Sr. Suzanne brought along donations from the Sisters at Mount Saint Vincent Convent. A total of \$35,000 was raised in this year’s event.

## Sisters in Print

**Sr. Margaret Beaudette** was profiled in *The Seton Way*, the newsletter of the Seton Shrine in Emmitsburg, MD. The front page article recapped Sister’s evolution from a college art professor to a fulltime sculptor. It cited several of her commissions and showed three of them. Sister is quoted as saying, “...that sculpture was the best way I could express that God, ever compassionate and kind, is incarnated in the figures I sculpt.”

**Sisters Regina Bechtle, Mary Ann Daly and Mary E. Mc Cormick** collaborated on an article entitled, “The Sisters of Charity Federation and the Vincentian Charism in North America: Extending the Reach of Charity.” It appeared in the Nov/Dec 2007 issue of *VINCENTIANA*, the journal of the international Congregation of the Mission.

**Sr. Margaret Egan’s** article, “Reflective Thinking: the Essence of Professional Development,” was published in the Fall/Winter 2007 issue of *EXCELSIOR*, the journal of the New York Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. ■

## Diamond Jubiliarians

February marked significant anniversaries in the religious lives of these five Sisters. Join us in gratitude for their combined 330 years of dedicated service.

**75 Years • Sr. Marie Aimee Walsh**

**70 Years • Sr. Ruth Marion McCullough**

**65 Years • Sr. Marilda Joseph Aeillo**

**60 Years • Sr. Marie Irene Breheny • Sr. Marita Rose O’Brien**

Did you know that the Sisters of Charity of New York *never* wore wedding bands? That *was* a custom though, in some religious communities with European roots.

# History in Stone on Mount Hilltop

by Sr. Regina Bechtle

Newcomers exploring the grounds at Mount Saint Vincent may be surprised to come upon a small cemetery on the hill just west of the Cardinal Hayes auditorium/gym. They wonder why is it there? Who is buried there?

The answers bring us back to 1856 when the Sisters of Charity bought Font Hill estate, a tract of “rocks and rills, trees and hills,” from Shakespearean actor Edwin Forrest. They renamed the property Mount Saint Vincent after their patron saint St. Vincent de Paul. Since the Congregation’s headquarters formally moved here in 1859, the Sisters have called this campus their home, their “motherhouse,” their administrative center, and, for some, their final resting place.

Sisters of Charity have served in New York City since 1817, when Mother (now Saint) Elizabeth Bayley Seton sent three Sisters to her native city to staff an orphanage at Prince and Mott Streets. Some of the 190-year history of the Sisters of Charity in New York can be read on the tombstones of the hilltop cemetery.

Partially obscured by hedges, this spot cradles the remains of 22 of the first 33 Sisters in the New York community. About 170 other Sisters have also been interred here since 1859.

Most of the gravestones are simple, horizontal slabs with each Sister’s name and date of death, but some are different.

A five-foot cross marks the grave of Mother Elizabeth Boyle, one of the earliest members of the community begun by St. Elizabeth Seton in Emmitsburg, MD, in 1809. Assigned to New York in 1822 shortly after Mother Seton’s death, Elizabeth Boyle was elected the first Mother Superior of the New York community when they set up an independent motherhouse in 1846.

Five vertical rectangular stones, erected and paid for by the United States government, belong to five of the 12 Sisters honored as veterans for their service as nurses during the Civil War. The New York Sisters contributed three years of military service, not on the battlefields, but at home. In 1862, the City Council opened a military hospital near 105<sup>th</sup> Street in Central Park, in the buildings of the original Mount Saint Vincent, then empty for several years. When asked to staff the hospital in their old motherhouse, the Sisters of Charity readily accepted.

During the violent Draft Riots of 1863, hoodlums forced their way into the hospital, threatened to burn it down, and ordered the Sisters to leave. The superior, Sr. Ulrica O’Reilly (buried in the Mount cemetery), categorically refused. Her calm reaction confounded the would-be arsonists, who left without incident.



*Most of the Sisters rest under simple block headstones. The exceptions are the vertical military-style markers for the Civil War nursing Sisters, and the tall cross over the final resting place of Mother Elizabeth Boyle.*

Sr. Mary Irene Fitzgibbon, who began the New York Foundling Hospital in 1869 with five dollars and one assistant, also rests in the cemetery. The New York Foundling, now one of the city’s major family services agencies, was featured in the *New York Times*’ Metro Section on September 3, 2007.

Many other Sisters interred at Mount Saint Vincent pioneered works in education, health care, and social service throughout the metropolitan area. Since the early 1900s, only those who have served as major superiors of the Congregation have been buried at MSV because of space limitations. The last interment was in May 2007, when Sr. Margaret Dowling was laid to rest. She had served as President of the Sisters of Charity from 1971 to 1979. ■

*This article includes excerpts from an article by Sr. Madeleine Marie Mahoney, SC, that originally appeared in the Riverdale Press, 8/20/92.*



## *In Memoriam*

### **Sr. Winifred Reilly • Nurse / Administrator**

Religious Name: Marie Anne • Entered: 1940 • Final vows: 1945

After entering the Congregation, Sister taught third grade for a year at St. Agnes in Manhattan before embarking on her nursing career in 1941. She was proud of her nursing education – RN, BS in Nursing and MS in Nursing Education – and her years of dedicated service as a nurse. Her 32 years at St. Joseph's Hospital in Yonkers included 15 years as Director of Medical Records. After that, Sister worked for 23 years as a medical records consultant for various nursing homes. She retired at age 83. All who knew her were impressed by her intelligence, humility and her deep desire to help others. We are most grateful that for 67 of her 90 years, Sr. Winifred was a Sister of Charity of New York.

### **Sr. Marie Liguori Leyer • Educator / Administrator**

Birth Name: Edna • Entered: 1929 • Final vows: 1935

Sr. Liguori devoted 31 years to her first ministry, teaching, at six elementary schools in the New York City area. During that period, she also taught school in The Bahamas for seven years, and continued to support it in many ways once back home. In 1962, Sister began her 38 year ministry at The New York Foundling in Manhattan. There, she was on staff in the finance office until 1998, then volunteered for two more years. Sr. Liguori had a marvelous memory and kept her students in her thoughts and prayers throughout her life. She was alert and sharp until her death at age 97. We are most grateful for her 78 years of dedicated service.

### **Sr. Mary Duane • Educator / Administrator**

Religious Name: David Mary • Entered: 1955 • Final vows: 1963

Sr. Mary taught at five elementary schools in the Archdiocese over 19 years. In 1977, she moved into secondary education. She served eight years at St. Gabriel's H.S. in New Rochelle, as a teacher and Assistant Administrator. That was followed by her longest ministry – at St. Raymond Academy in the Bronx. Sister served there for 12 years: six as a teacher, three as a guidance counselor, and three as dean of students. After that, health problems curtailed Sister's school ministries, but she provided pastoral care at the Convent of Mary the Queen for six years. She was 71 at the time of her death and had served the Congregation faithfully for 52 years.

*The Whalen sisters entered the Congregation within 5 years of each other and died within a month of each other.*

### **Sr. Margaret Mary Whalen • Educator / Administrator**

Religious Name: Sr. William Marie • Entered: 1940 • Final vows: 1945

Sr. Margaret Mary spent 44 years in education, primarily as a teacher of grades 1-3. She taught in every borough of NYC except for Staten Island, as well as at schools in Westchester, Rockland and Suffolk Counties. Sister also taught for three years in The Bahamas. Her two longest ministries were St. Gabriel's in the Bronx (11 years as a teacher) and St. Patrick Elementary School in Bedford Village (six years as principal). In the early '70s, Sr. Margaret became a special reading teacher to help children to master this important skill. She spent 21 years in St. John Evangelist parish in Center Moriches: 11 as a teacher and ten in parish outreach work and tutoring. We are most grateful that 67 of her 87 years were dedicated to ministries of the Sisters of Charity of New York.

### **Sr. Marie Julia Whalen • Educator / Administrator**

Birth Name: Mary Elizabeth • Entered: 1935 • Final vows: 1941

Sr. Julia was an educator for most almost half a century. Former students remember her fondly as a fine teacher with a great sense of humor who was interested in all school activities, academic and athletic. Bahamians remember with great fondness and gratitude her total of 18 years (before air-conditioning) in their island country, as teacher (two years), principal (10 years) and Supervisor of Schools (six years). In the US, Sister was principal of St. Monica in Jamaica, Queens for seven years. She also taught at several parochial schools in Manhattan. In 1972, Sr. Julia began a 22-year association with St. John Evangelist in Center Moriches. She taught for 12 years, then worked in outreach for a decade at this Suffolk County parish. Sister loved getting to know the people and their needs and felt that her missionary experience in The Bahamas was perfect preparation for this ministry. Sr. Julia served faithfully for 72 years. She was 91 at the time of her death.

### **Sr. Mary Josepha De Barbieri • Educator / Administrator**

Birth Name: Virginia Patricia • Entered: 1948 • Final vows: 1956

Sr. Josepha began her 57-year ministry in education as a teacher at her alma mater – Cathedral H.S. in Manhattan. Twelve years there were followed by 18 years at Cardinal Spellman H.S. in the Bronx, where she chaired the Social Studies Dept. In 1981, Sister began what would ultimately be a 27-year mission at St. Joseph by-the-Sea H.S. on Staten Island. While there, she taught Social Studies, chaired the Department, and served as Director of Student Services. Sr. Josepha was noted as a gifted teacher who could have taught a brick. She enjoyed needle work and playing Scrabble. Her aunt, Sr. Mary Andrew, SC, was a gifted artist. Sister entered into Eternal Life at age 84, in the 60th year of her commitment as a Sister of Charity of New York.



## Seasonalities



### New Program

The Sisters have developed a new summer volunteer program which will enable young women to experience the Congregation's charism of charity. *Charity in the City* will give 18-21 year olds a chance to work with the poor at various Sisters of Charity ministries, mostly in Manhattan. Think of it as a short-term Peace Corps. The volunteers will live with the Sisters and experience their community and prayer. There will be plenty of chances to visit NYC's tourist sites, too.

The *Charity in the City* program runs June 6-20. The application is online at <http://www.scny.org/CharityinCity.html>. Questions can be addressed to Sr. Donna Dodge at [ddodge@scny.org](mailto:ddodge@scny.org) or 718-549-9200 x 220.

### Save the Date

Join us at the Yale Club, opposite Grand Central Station in New York City, for the first annual Sisters of Charity Benefit on Thursday, May 8th, 6-9pm. Proceeds will benefit various ministries affiliated with the Sisters of Charity whose goals are to improve the lives of the homeless, women in shelters, new immigrants and women in need.

Enjoy an evening of good company, good music, and delicious hors d'oeuvres. Bid on a collection of great auction items, including resort stays, theater tickets, restaurant passes, tickets to NYC pro sports games and more! Award-winning playwright and director John Patrick Shanley (*Doubt* and *Moonstruck*) will be the guest of honor at the reception. His first school teachers were Sisters of Charity – at St. Anthony School in the Bronx. For more information, contact Bill Hurley at 718-549-2248 or [bhurley@scny.org](mailto:bhurley@scny.org)

### Parish Anniversary

St. Anthony's Parish in the Bronx is celebrating its 100th Anniversary the weekend of May 31st – June 2th. The Sisters of Charity opened the parish school on Mansion Street in 1931. SC Associate Margaret Comaskey is working on the reunion events. All net proceeds will go to St. Anthony's Parish and School. For more information, call 718-931-4040 or go to [www.stanthonychurchmansion.org](http://www.stanthonychurchmansion.org)

## Reflection

“Elizabeth Ann Seton is a saint. St. Elizabeth Ann Seton is an American.  
All of us say this with special joy, and with the intention of honoring the land and the nation  
from which she sprang forth as the first flower in the calendar of the saints.  
Elizabeth Ann Seton was wholly American! Rejoice for your glorious daughter. Be proud of her.  
And know how to preserve her fruitful heritage.”

POPE PAUL VI IN 1975

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