

LADIES OF CHARITY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA® SERVICETTE

"To serve rather than to be served"



AIC USA

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WINTER 2013

A ONCE-IN-A-LIFETIME HOLIDAY EVENT

MARGE CASHIN

PAST PRESIDENT

LOC ST. JOHN'S UNIVERSITY

In response to the needs of others, Joy Huang and Kim Berdy, two young women from New York, created "Secret Sandy," a web driven project which allowed families from areas impacted by the hurricane to register for toys and gifts on a wish list. The site also requested that people donate items to specific registered children to fulfill their wishes. The goal was to provide a Christmas party for families from Queens, a borough of New York City, who were devastated by Super-storm Sandy. It was a huge undertaking. The assistance of many, many people was needed to successfully organize such an ambitious event. The Ladies of Charity of St. John's University (LOC/STJ) agreed to be part of the effort.

Several women from the LOC/STJ joined the organizing group and became responsible for the arts and crafts por-



Marie Fouche at the Secret Sandy party.

Continued — see Holiday Event p. 14

Dr. Carolyn Y. Woo, Assembly Keynote Speaker

"Do we choose to be born or are we fitted to the times we are born into?"

- Abraham Lincoln

Mary Beth O'Brien, Past President, LCUSA

Have you had a chance to see the movie Lincoln? President Lincoln had a great talent for saying a lot in a short speech. Many issues pressed on Lincoln on that rainy day in 1865: how to end a war, Reconstruction, the fate of former slaves. Lincoln said simply what would guide him through his next term: "With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations." He was a source of hope for others, making the world a better place. Lincoln changed the world.

Fast forward to the 2013 LCUSA National Assembly and keynote speaker Dr. Carolyn Y. Woo, a woman of deep faith and a strong commitment to the mission, whether it is in a university setting or a large service organization. Most recently, Dr. Woo served as the dean of the Mendoza Business School at the University of Notre Dame. During her tenure at the university, the Mendoza College of Business achieved a number one ranking in 2010-2011 (Bloomberg Business Week). On January 1, 2012, she became the seventh chief executive of Catholic Relief Services (CRS), founded in 1943 by the Catholic bishops of the United States to serve World War II survivors in Europe. Dr. Woo leads an organization of nearly 7,000 employees in more than 90 countries on five continents.

"Dr. Woo will bring exceptional abilities and gifts to the task of serving the poor around the world in the name of Catholics throughout the United States," said Bishop Gerald F. Kicanas, who chairs the CRS board of directors. "She has innumerable contacts in the business world...her ability to mobilize as government funding diminishes will be vital."

Dr. Woo is not afraid of adversity and she believes adversity helps shape our faith. She finds great comfort and peace from her faith. She is humble and confident.

Continued — see Assembly Keynote p. 14



Dr. Carolyn Y. Woo



**Binghamton
LOC Celebrate
75 Years**
Page 5



**Junior LOC
News**
Page 7



**Welcome
Pope Francis!**
Page 3

The *SERVICETTE* is a publication of the Association of the Ladies of Charity as a record of their activities in the USA

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MISSION STATEMENT

To provide Vincentian leadership to women acting together against all forms of poverty.

VISION STATEMENT

LCUSA-AIC provides Vincentian leadership of transformation assisting persons who are vulnerable to move from marginalization and despair to participation and hope.

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP

Individual members are supportive of the mission and purpose of LCUSA and participate in the ministry of the Ladies of Charity by prayer and/or service and pay dues prescribed by the board of directors.



SERVICETTE NEWS DEADLINE

The deadline to submit articles and photos for the Summer issue of the *SERVICETTE*:

Monday, June 3, 2013

Articles and photos can be sent by e-mail to: kandersieracki@aol.com
 Articles and photos should be sent separately and not within the text document.

Please contact us for info.



Who Made Us?

Bishop David A. Zubik
Episcopal Chairman

“God, infinitely perfect and blessed in himself, in a plan of sheer goodness freely created man to make him share in his own blessed life.” That’s the first sentence of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, released in October 1992. It’s a book that belongs on every Catholic shelf. To many of us, that first sentence of the catechism seems very familiar, because it reflects what we learned from the Baltimore Catechism.

Q: Who made us? **A:** God made us.

Q: Why did God make us? **A:** God made us to show forth his goodness and to share with us his everlasting happiness in heaven.

Those lines from the current and the earlier catechisms clearly describe the fundamental basis of “Catholic social thought.” God made us: me, you, every other woman, man and child in this world. He made us all so that we can share with him eternal happiness in heaven. No ruler, no culture, no class, no boss, no job, no economic system, no anything else can supersede or destroy our essential individual human dignity, because that dignity comes from God.

The foundation of Catholic social teaching is the commitment to the sacredness of human life from conception until natural death. It means that we have a fundamental moral obligation to respect the dignity of every life, of every person, as a unique creation of God. That is our moral vision, and we see all issues from that clear focus. Because of that vision, we cannot accept direct attacks on innocent human life: abortion, euthanasia, genocide, clon-

ing or medical experimentation on living human embryos. At the same time, Catholic belief in the dignity of life leads us to oppose those sins of the culture that attack human life, such as torture, unjust war and the unnecessary death penalty. We must also fight those things that threaten human life, including racism, poverty and human suffering, both in their causes and their results. This is the source of the Church’s 2000 year dedication to serving the poor, the oppressed, the orphan, the sick, the hungry, the immigrant, the imprisoned, serving anyone in need.

The Church’s social concerns rest not only in direct service, but in creating a society through government, law, economics and policy where the common good and the ability of every person to live out his or her full potential is recognized. The Church hungers and thirsts to build a culture where the dignity of every person, particularly the poor and vulnerable, is recognized as a paramount virtue and the participation of each and every person is assured.

This is why the Church constantly speaks out on a host of issues in the public arena. The Church is required by our witness to the Gospel to speak out for and with the powerless. That is why the voice of the church is most often heard on behalf of those whom the rest of society wants to ignore: the immigrant and the imprisoned; the aged and the terminally ill; the disabled and the unborn child.

It all comes back to who we are and why we are. We are children of God. God made us to show forth his goodness and to share with us his everlasting happiness in heaven and that’s the greatest news we can’t forget. ✦

Dates to Remember

- **September 20–21, 2013**
LCUSA National Assembly
 San Jose, Calif.
- **September 26–29, 2013**
Vincentian Spirituality Retreat
 Evansville, Ind.
- **October 25–27, 2013**
Vincentian Family Meeting
 Indianapolis, Ind.



President's Message

Gayle Johnson
LCUSA President

In each diocese this year programs have been instituted to take us through "the Year of Faith." The emphasis is a renewal of our Catholicism and a study of the scriptures. In my parish one of the books we have been reading and discussing is *Rediscover Catholicism* by Matthew Kelly. There is no doubt a crisis in Christ's church much as there was when St. Vincent began his ministry in the seventeenth century. During that period a financial and economic crisis existed and the poor were reviled. They were homeless, sick, starving and the general approach was to get them off the streets so they could not be seen or heard. Vincent's message was that Christ came for the poor. Christ's ministry in his lifetime was to the sick, the impoverished, the forgotten of society. During this Year of Faith we are being asked to once again turn to the scriptures as the source of our faith.

Vincentian spirituality is scripture based. This is what differentiates our work from those of humanists who emphasize doing good works for other. The scriptures call us to put that faith into action. This was the message of our Superior General Father Gregory Gay's Lenten message to the Vincentian Family. It is the basis of the Vincentian three A's: Accompaniment, Action, Advocacy. Vincent did more than remind us of the fact that "to serve the poor is to serve Christ." He called us to walk with the poor, to make them our masters, and to serve them in an organized way that would not only alleviate their immediate needs, but change the structures that kept them in poverty. He called us to be their voice in dealing with the world. To do that Vincent approached royalty, the wealthy, and even the hierarchy of

the Church. Vincent met with opposition. It is not easy to accept change. He was one man. He enlisted the laity (the Association of the Charities), St. Louise de Marillac, and later the Confraternity of the Missions and the Daughters of Charity. He was not interested in alleviating poverty in one parish (Chatillon), one city (Paris), one country (France) but worldwide. To do this Vincent knew there was strength in numbers. In St. Vincent's own words, "Our vocation is to go not merely to one parish or even one diocese, but all over the earth. And to do what? To inflame hearts to do what the Son of God did."

Today the work of our association is not only to feed, clothe, and give shelter to those living in poverty but to change situations which degrade the individual and prevent him/her from living their lives with dignity. It is not easy to look at the face of poverty on a daily basis and not want to give all our resources to alleviating the hunger, misery, and illness we see. The purpose of a national association is to provide training to local associations and to collaborate with other Catholic and non-profit organizations in implementing projects that break the cycle of poverty and move the individual to personal dignity and control of his/her destiny. In collaborating with these same organizations LCUSA can influence legislation that recognizes the roots of poverty and gives the poor a voice. LCUSA is a member of the leadership team of the Vincentian Collaborators and actively involved in providing training and initiating projects with the Vincentian Family. This year our national association joined with the Vincentian Family in their effort to renew the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), to support meaningful immigration reform, and to encourage the states to adopt the Medicaid expansion. We are supporters of the United States Council of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and are sponsors of the Catholic Social Ministry Gathering in Washington, D.C. each February. There we work with 14 other Catholic organizations

to influence legislators and ask them to help alleviate the plight of those living in poverty.

It is my goal during my presidency to effect change that will break the cycle of generational poverty in the United States and, through involvement with AIC, the world. To do this we need a strong national association, one that is more visible; a national association that works with each member association to provide training and assistance in their mission. The training and education will occur at our national assemblies, at bi-annual Vincentian Family trainings, at regional trainings and in visits by our board of directors to local associations. LCUSA will continue the Hager and Downey grants and hope, in the future, to award grants for developing systemic change projects. We will create an interactive communication environment through the Servicette, our website and email messages. We will support our local associations in membership growth and evangelization of our mission. We will continue to be an active member of AIC, enabling them to spread our mission globally.

To be successful, Ladies of Charity of the United States needs your continued support and involvement. Please take advantage of the opportunities provided to you and continue to share with us your mission and projects. Become involved in our training and educational sessions and the issues of advocacy we bring to you. As always we continue to try and emulate the example of our founders, St. Vincent de Paul, St. Louise de Marillac, and St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in all we do.

WELCOME POPE FRANCIS

The Ladies of Charity of the United States in union with their 51 sister associations of AIC and the Universal Church would like to welcome Pope Francis. His desire to serve as Bishop of Rome with simplicity, humility and charity reflects the virtues with which we serve those living in poverty and social injustice. We offer him our love and support as he begins to direct and evangelize Christ's Church. ✦

ADVOCACY CONNECTIONS

LCUSA Advocacy Committee

Local Ladies of Charity associations are encouraged to continue their education on the issues of Violence Against Women and Children. This is a very broad topic and includes domestic violence, child abuse and neglect, human trafficking and enslavement of domestic workers. LCUSA, represented by Lorraine Parker-Miller of the Archdiocese of Washington LOC, is an active member of the Coalition of Catholic Agencies Against Human Trafficking, based at the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. The Coalition encourages all member agencies to host community based events to learn more about modern slavery and raise awareness.

The Ladies of Charity have also been invited by Sr. Mary Ellen Lacy, DC, of NETWORK to collaborate with the St. Vincent de Paul Society (Voice of the Poor), Catholic hospitals, Catholic Charities and others working on Medicaid expansion at the state level. The recent decision of the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the Affordable Care Act of 2011. In the same decision, the Court determined that the provision expanding Medicaid to persons at 133% of the federal poverty level is not mandatory. States can opt into or out of the Medicaid expansion without penalty. The federal government will cover the costs of the expansion fully until 2016, moving to 90% in 2020 and thereafter. For low-income people, Medicaid remains the most comprehensive provider

for health insurance. This is an important issue for women as well, expected to produce a significant reduction in the number of uninsured women. (In 2010, 55 % of uninsured women in the United States had incomes low enough to qualify for coverage.) Teams are forming in Louisiana, Texas, Virginia, Missouri, Ohio, Arizona, Tennessee, Iowa, New Jersey and Arkansas to advocate with governors and state legislatures to expand Medicaid.

If you want more information go to <http://www.network-lobby.org/nuns-bus-medicaid-expansion> and download the "Toolkit." To see where your state stands on the expansion you can click on <http://www.familiesusa.org/issues/medicaid/expansion-center/resources-from-the-states.html>

Two associations have already been active in advocacy. Marie Copeland is chair of public policy for LOC Albany. She sponsors learning activities at her parish and participates in the annual "Catholics at the Capitol" day, visiting state legislators and lobbying on behalf of issues identified by the New York State Conference of Catholic Bishops. Holly Walter is advocacy chair for LOC Buffalo. She is a member of the diocesan social justice commission, has written articles for the association newsletter, created petitions on significant issues and with two other members, conferred with the district staff of a local congresswoman.

Let us know if you want to help. If you or your association is already involved in these issues with your state Catholic Conference or other advocacy groups or if you wish to get involved, contact Mary Ann Dantuono at Dantuonm@stjohns.edu for more information. ♦



Sr. Elizabeth Cullen (on far left) with other award recipients. Photo by Mike.

Milwaukee Spiritual Moderator Honored

Information provided by the Archdiocese of Milwaukee Communication Office
Submitted by Mary Domer, co-president, Milwaukee LOC

Sister Mary Elizabeth Cullen, DC, spiritual moderator for the Milwaukee

Ladies of Charity from 2010-2012 was one of 15 recent recipients of the Archbishop's Vatican II Award for distinguished service and outstanding contributions to the Church and society. Archbishop Jerome ListECKI presided at

the prayer service and awards ceremony on October 23 at the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist.

During her service in a hospital outreach program from 2008-2010, Sr. Mary Elizabeth recognized the need for expansion at a dental clinic serving an impoverished neighborhood. She secured a grant from the Daughters of Charity Mission and Ministry Foundation which enabled the facility, now named the St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Clinic, to double in size and increase its level of services. The clinic now takes a proactive role in educating young students through a portable oral health care program.

Sister Mary Elizabeth also served as the spiritual moderator for the Ladies of Charity and on the spirituality committee of the St. Vincent de Paul Society. "Through these two Vincentian family

Continued — see Milwaukee p. 6

Celebrating 75 Years of Service Greater Binghamton Ladies of Charity

Suzanne Johnson, President

At the request of Fr. Joseph B. Toomey, 12 community-minded and active ladies came together in October 1937, to help serve the Binghamton, N.Y., area. They named the group "The Patronesses" and charged annual dues of 50 cents. The first year they organized a tea, had receipts of just over \$23 and spent less than \$21. They were off and running and haven't stopped since. Their early work helped needy families and created a lending library cart at Lourdes Hospital. The cart project became the basis for the Lourdes Hospital Auxiliary. In 1976, the group was given a charter with the Ladies of Charity USA. Marie Buckley, president of the Association of Ladies of Charity of the United States (ALCUSA, former name of LCUSA) 1982-1984, states her home association of Binghamton generously provided funds to support her official travel. She was the first president to visit all five regions. She also points out that beginning with her own election to the national board in 1968, at least one member from Binghamton has served on each subsequent board.

The Binghamton association focuses on both spiritual reflection and service to those in need in the community. The spiritual component is aided by Spiritual Advisor Fr. Gerald Buckley and Spiritual Moderator Sr. Diane Louttit, DC. The association also recognizes the outstanding support of Sr. Mary Anne Brawley, DC, spiritual moderator for fourteen years until she was called to a new mission in July 2012. Each year members celebrate the Christmas season with a Mass and dinner. During Lent, new members are invested during a Mass followed by a morning of reflection and brunch.

The Nearly New Shop is the primary service project. Donated gently used clothing is sold for nominal prices

or provided free to people who cannot afford to buy. The money raised supports other programs including assembling and distributing layettes to families in need; answering requests from elementary school nurses to meet student needs for proper clothing; and providing school supplies and books for young students. During the last several years, the group has given yearly grants and donation of over \$20,000 to other community groups, including Catholic Charities. The association has also funded scholarships, community service awards and donations to meet emergencies.

The members also have fun! Annual events include a fashion show of clothing from the shop; games of the B-Mets, an Eastern League baseball team; local plays, shopping trips and wine tours. This year's 75th anniversary was celebrated with a tea, which included delicious savory and sweet food. Several ladies who have been members for more than 40 years were able to attend. A slide show of pictures from past years brought smiles and laughter.

Members are thankful they have been able to serve the greater Binghamton community for 75 years, and hope to continue doing so, following in the footsteps of St. Vincent de Paul. ♦

Photos from top: A vintage tea set was used for the Binghamton anniversary tea.

Second and third: Members having a good time at a 1970s fashion show.

Fourth: Loyal members Jeanne Murphy and Pat Pender enjoying the tea.

Bottom: Daughters of Charity Sr. Maureen Rainone, Sr. Diane Louttit and Sally Paniccia participating in the celebration.

SIGN-UP FOR CAPWIZ

Join the Legislative Network of the
Vincentian Family.

Sign up as a Lady of Charity
<http://www.capwiz.com/svdpusa/mlm/signup/>



Looking Back, While Moving Forward

Ladies of Charity of Central Alabama, Marlyss Giles, president

As a child growing up in Birmingham, Ala., current Ladies of Charity member Jackie Kennedy remembers going with her mother, a Lady of Charity, to deliver baskets to the needy. Jackie recalls, “We had a caravan of cars. Mother, my grandmother and my aunts would all drive, each car loaded with Christmas baskets.” Riding in the car with the Daughters of Charity, Jackie also recalls how their cornettes (head covers) would get in the way. “They used clips to bring in the wings of the cornettes to make them smaller and if the clips slipped, the cornettes would spring open again.”



Bishop Robert T. Baker talking with student volunteers at the Beacons of Hope fundraiser.

The Ladies of Charity association was initially started in Birmingham by Fr. James Coyle in 1911, when he asked the ladies of the district to join the organization. The group flourished for years providing service to the poor in many different ways: they sold flags on Flag Day, helped at the hospital, delivered gifts at Christmas, and had a sale for St. Patrick’s Day. The group was dissolved on March 19, 1972, because of the small number of members. However, the organization has experienced a resurrection in the new millennium as the Ladies of Charity of Central Alabama (LCCA).

Today in Birmingham, the call to fight poverty in all forms has led LCCA to work in several venues. Monthly, several members volunteer at MedMission, a not-for-profit organization that provides supplies for international Christian medical mission trips. Some also volunteer at The Nest, where homeless individuals receive basic medical care and a meal, and some assist with tutoring at St. Barnabas Catholic School. LCCA also hosts an annual fundraiser in support of the Beacons of Hope, three Catholic elementary schools. Members assist with the Christmas Store at St. Vincent’s Hospital, a collaborative effort between the Catholic Center for Concern and the associates of St. Vincent’s Health System to serve the needy during the holiday season. Members of the association represent

Ladies of Charity by involvement in many other charitable works, locally and nationally.

LCCA seeks to combine spiritual formation and action and, in so doing, continue St. Vincent de Paul’s work in our own day. Recently, the association held a retreat titled, “It’s All About the Journey.” Participants combined information, sharing, prayer, and reflection to expand their understanding of serving Christ through service to people living in poverty. The guest speakers, Sr. Frances Ryan, DC, Ladies of Charity national spiritual moderator and Sr. Elyse Staab, DC, Vincentian Family representative, spoke about the past, present, and future of the Ladies of Charity.

LCCA, as are many other associations, is seeking additional members for its dynamic group. Perhaps a woman has a family connection with the Ladies of Charity if her mother or grandmother (like Jackie Kennedy) was a member in earlier years. Maybe she was a member before moving to her current home, or maybe she feels a call to serve the poor while growing in her own spirituality. Whatever the motivation, there is joy in working with like-minded women dedicated to serving the Lord in the charism of St. Vincent de Paul. There is a place for you in the Ladies of Charity. Come and join us today! ♦



From left, Sr. Ellen Reilly, DC, Connie O'Brien, LCCA member, and Sr. Brenda Monahan, DC, working behind the scenes at the event.

MILWAUKEE

Cont'd from p. 4

organizations, I became involved with the wonderful ways they serve the needs of the frail and impacted families in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee,” she stated.

The Daughters of Charity have left the archdiocese after 166 years of service. Sr. Mary Elizabeth has relocated to the provincial headquarters in St. Louis, and is confident that God will continue to lead her in the future.

The Milwaukee LOC are grateful for Sr. Mary Elizabeth’s guidance, and pray for her continued success. ♦



Albany Junior LOC



St. Jerome Junior LOC



Active and Growing in Numbers!

Candice Stellato, President, Albany LOC

The Albany Association of Ladies of Charity is delighted and proud to be working with the Junior Ladies of Charity at the Academy of the Holy Names. The Junior Ladies were instituted by the late Sr. Connie Casey, SNJM, former president of the school. Under her guidance and leadership, the Junior Ladies became a dedicated group of young women seeking to live out their gospel call to serve the poor.

These young ladies are truly remarkable. They support the Ladies of Charity ministry, Mary's Corner, by collecting baby items including diapers, food/formula, wipes, and baby wash; they have decorated and filled book bags for mothers to take home to read to their children; they sort donated clothing and put outfits together on hangers. Some of them go to Nicaragua each year for one week under the auspices of the North Country Mission of Hope. They raise money to build water wells for villages in Africa.

The Ladies of Charity partner with the Juniors throughout the year. Under the leadership of Christine Russo Richardson, the campus minister and a Lady of Charity, and Judith Wesley, a teacher at the Academy, close ties have <http://aic.ladiesofcharity.us>

been forged. In addition to shared service projects, the two groups enjoy a joint social event each year, inviting the Juniors' mothers as well.

Ladies of Charity also attend the Junior installation in December each year. This year, 28 young women were installed and each received a Certificate of Appreciation from LCUSA. The group included girls from grades 7-11. The induction took place during a special liturgy for the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, which also recognized the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, the school's sponsoring order.

Welcome to these 28 new Junior members of the Vincentian Family. ✦

St Jerome Catholic Church Archdiocese of Washington

Bernadette Tirador, President, Anya Trudeau, Secretary, and Katie Riordan

When the group first formed in the early summer of 2012, the Junior Ladies of Charity of St. Jerome's parish in Hyattsville, Md., was only a handful of girls. Now that number has tripled. They have worked on six service projects for both their community and parish: organizing and helping to run two parish feast day celebrations; holding a drive for personal care items for abused women and children; making Montessori supplies for the parish atrium; supporting a winter coat drive; and assisting with a dinner for the Catholic students of the University of Maryland.

The Juniors also had fun filming and producing a short video of themselves in action which can be seen on You Tube and has been viewed worldwide. The video is available by entering "St. Jerome's Jr. Ladies of Charity Projects" in a search engine, or directly at youtube.com/watch?v=Smo7o66z2Kg. The group also recently won the LCUSA Tee-Shirt design contest; in addition to their winning design being incorporated with Juniors across the country, they will receive \$100 towards future projects and service work.

With continued focus, the Juniors are planning additional projects. Nine of the Junior LOC were inducted in December 2012, and the entire group will continue "to serve rather than be served." ✦

Portrait of a JLOC Group

St. Mary's on the Hill, Lancaster, N.Y., Diocese of Buffalo
Marian Snyder

Organized about 15 years ago by Agnes Kuryla, then president of the parish Ladies of Charity association, and Marie Buckley, past president of

Continued — see JLOC p. 14



St. Mary's Junior LOC



Lady of Charity is Unsung Hero

By Christine Young, Salt Lake City

Lady of Charity Florence Holtshouser has been feeding the hungry in Salt Lake City for more than 50 years and is known for her smile.

Most days during lunch she stands outside the kitchen window at Saint Vincent de Paul dining hall and “as the trays come out, she hands them to the homeless person, looks them in the eye and says ‘hello and have a good day,’ and you can tell by her voice and her sweet demeanor that she really means it,” said Dennis Kelsch, Catholic Community Services (CCS) Basic Needs Services director. “They know her well and they know her by name. I think for the homeless person, having a steady person that they see every day, who is kind to them, offers them one corner of stability in their lives.”

“She has a smile and a ‘hello’ for everyone; she is a true Christian woman,” said Jackie Harover, Our Lady of Lourdes Ladies of Charity president, who has known Florence for 35 years. “She always has a kind word to say about everybody. I’ve sung in the choir with her for years, worked with her at the Soup Kitchen, she’s been in the altar society, been the Woman of the Year, and she treats every person with respect, dignity and kindness.” Holtshouser is a hard working volunteer, said Jeff Bailey, CCS Food

Continued — see Unsung Hero p. 13 bottom



Coats for the Community

Kathy Kavanaugh, Diocese of Albany

The Ladies of Charity of the Albany, N.Y., area held a drive, “Coats for the Community,” for the benefit of the Cohoes and Watervliet communities. In preparation, the Ladies contacted many of the parishes to which members belong, as well as other organizations and businesses, receiving about 2,000 coats and jackets. The donations enabled the women to serve 463 residents, who received about 925 coats and jackets on October 26 at the distribution site in Cohoes.

The event was much more than giving beautiful and warm coats. It was a touching story of the Ladies of Charity working in harmony with the community of Cohoes. The mayor and his office, Cohoes schools, Cohoes and Watervliet Housing Authority, Cohoes food pantries, churches, City Hall, Community Center,



Rotary Club and local service agencies all worked together.

At the end of the event, remaining coats were given to Mary’s Corner (another LOC outreach site in Cohoes), Cohoes schools and Housing Authority, Catholic Charities and about nine other

organizations and charities. About 75 volunteers worked toward a common vision, doing all that was needed over the course of many weeks. On October 26, the Ladies of Charity demonstrated charity at its finest as they helped residents find just the right coat for themselves or their families. It seemed that every time something was needed, it was available within a day!

God and Sts. Vincent and Louise were surely with them every step of the way. ✦

The Nashville Tennessee Ladies of Charity were very busy in 2012 “making a difference.” They continued their monthly ministry at Bordeaux Hospital by playing bingo with the patients. In October, they welcomed 16 new members during an installation at the Cathedral of the Incarnation with Bishop of Nashville David R. Choby and Spiritual Advisor Fr. Philip Breen presiding. A reception and informational meeting followed.

2012 IN A NUTSHELL

LOC Nashville, Claudia Kornmeyer

In addition to their very successful “Thrift Shop” spring and fall consignment clothing sales and their summer “Stuff Galore Sale,” fundraising was the name of the game in 2012. All fundraising efforts throughout the year assist LOC welfare and scholarship programs.

A 16 member committee chaired by Nancy Smith and Claudia Kornmeyer worked to present “Dine and Draw,” a reverse raffle fundraiser on November 3. Since this was a gaming event, the group obtained a license from the state and approval from the bishop. Over 250 guests attended the dinner and raffle. A grand prize of \$10,000 was awarded. Tickets were sold for \$100 each and combined with the generosity of many underwriters; the net proceeds were over \$23,500. Fr.



for their game against the Tennessee Titans.

In December, the Christmas Basket project was in full swing. Tina Whitley chaired this event for the second year in a row. With the help of area grade school and high school students, men’s clubs, Debbie Chadwick’s team from the Rochelle Adult Center, and friends, relatives, members and spouses of the Ladies of Charity, over 775 Christmas boxes were filled with 24 food items each and delivered to needy families.

The year ended with a well-attended membership meeting and Christmas luncheon on December 7. The day began with Mass celebrated by Fr. Joe Pat Breen, brother of LOC’s spiritual advisor. The association honored long time Welfare Office employee, Gail Burgess, who retired after more than 30 years of dedicated service. The new officers of the board of directors for 2013/2014 were installed: President Lucky Van De Gejuchte; *(photo above)* President Elect Gail Palmer; Vice-President Ellen Posch; Recording Secretary Susan Murphy; Treasurer Jean Buffer; and Corresponding Secretary Jan Marks. Suzanne Sevier, outgoing president, her officers and committee chairs for the past two years were celebrated and thanked for their dedicated service.



LOC Nashville members pray that God will continue to bless the work of their hands in his name. ✧

Left: Nashville Ladies of Charity volunteering at the consignment sale.

Downey Grant in Pittsburgh

Judy Weismann, President, All Saints Parish

In 2012, the Ladies of Charity of All Saints parish, Etna, Pa., received a \$100 Diane Downey grant to support their reading enrichment activities in the religious education program. Sharyan Borgan, director of faith formation, stated “the funds were used...to purchase much needed DVDs featuring the Eucharist and Reconciliation for the junior high classes. So much of the CCD library is dated and fresh material is a joy to add.” ✧



Judy Weismann (right) and Sharyan Borgan

Christmas Gifts for Children

Diocese of Buffalo

The Ladies of Charity of Buffalo and volunteers from the community spent many hours preparing Christmas gift packages for nearly 3,500 children. Each package included an age and gender appropriate toy, a book, matching hat and gloves and an ornament. All items were brand new. Ladies of Charity collaborates with several other community groups in a “Holiday Partnership,” with coordination of supplies and recipients. ✧



Bonnie Hewett preparing Christmas gifts for children in Buffalo.

Introducing Francie Duffield, Lay Pioneer in Vincentian Study

Diocese of Nashville, Southern Region
Kathleen Sieracki

During the 2010 national assembly in Nashville, Sr. Frances Ryan, DC, presented a workshop titled “Spirituality and the Ladies of Charity.” One of the goals of the workshop was to encourage members to learn more about the origin and history of the Vincentian charism. The educational program, available on the LCUSA website, <http://aic.ladiesofcharity.us/resources/lay-spiritual-moderators-formation>, was designed with an eye to the future, when lay women may assume the role of spiritual moderator.

Under the guidance of Sr. Dorothy Olinger, DC, spiritual moderator of the Nashville LOC, Francie studied the on-line program for six months. She describes the studies as “steeped in history,” and her visit to Emmitsburg during the 2012 assembly reinforced her connection to the foundations of the Vincentian Family. Francie views the module as a teaching tool to help people become more aware of their vocation to serve Christ through people living in poverty. Sr. Fran praises Francie’s insight into the role of the laity in the universal call to holiness. Mary Ann Harmon of Dallas and Jude Magers of Indianapolis have also begun this study program.

Francie’s interest in Vincentian spirituality flows naturally from her education and parish work. She has a Master’s Degree in Pastoral Studies and Theology from Loyola University of New Orleans. Francie works part-time as the director of adult faith formation and ministries at St. Stephen Catholic Community in Nashville, where she organizes and facilitates a wide range of programs. She also serves as a funeral planner, helping bereaved families with both practical and liturgical decisions.



A native of Oklahoma, Francie and her husband Carl relocated to Nashville 15 years ago. They have four grown children living in Oklahoma and the state of Washington. Since their children and grandchildren are miles away, Francie and Carl concentrate some day-to-day affection on their two Persian cats.

Thanks Francie for using your skills and talents to serve the Ladies of Charity in this role of lay spiritual moderator. ♦

Keys to the Council: Unlocking the Teaching of Vatican II

Richard R. Gaillardetz and
Catherine E. Clifford
Reviewed by Margaret Hanson

This is a book with an appeal to the many Ladies of Charity who lived through the period of the Second Vatican Council fifty years ago and experienced the changes in the life of the church that it brought about, as well as to younger people searching for reasons why we in the church do what we do in mission and worship. The authors are theologians who have written an informative book which those involved in the many ministries of the church, including the Ladies of Charity, whether it be participating in a parish religious education program, conducting an adult faith discussion group or teaching at the college level, will find useful.

Gaillardetz and Clifford have extracted themes from the 16 council documents which were approved by the

body of bishops. The selected themes examine the history of the texts, providing a vehicle for a deeper understanding of the council’s proclamations. The authors illustrate the profundity of the teaching that all the baptized, and not only the ordained, manifest Christ present and active in the church (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World). They give credence to Christ’s work in the Ladies of Charity service to those who are living in poverty as well as to the priestly character of the Christian community and they imbue responsibility in faithful Catholics to fully engage in the liturgy and be active participants in the celebration of the Eucharist.

This reasonably priced book was published in 2012 by Liturgical Press and can be ordered at 1-800-858-5450 for \$19.95, plus \$7 shipping and handling, and is also available at amazon.com ♦

Shoes for Kids



Toni K. Gaines, President
DC Parish Group

The Ladies of Charity of the District of Columbia Parish Group reactivated the *Shoes for Kids Fund* as its group service project.

The project will enable needy school aged children to buy new shoes. The DC Ladies of Charity purchased 120 Payless Shoe gift cards to be distributed among the six participating parishes. Each parish received 20 cards worth \$20 each, to distribute to appropriate school aged children within their respective communities. ♦



Through Him All Things Are Possible

Valerie Matulis, president, Naples LOC

(Adapted from St. John the Evangelist Sunday Bulletin)

Under the direction of Father John J. Ludden, pastor of St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church, and Valerie



Matulis, LOC president, parishioners were invited to choose a Christmas ornament from a giving tree to help provide a bicycle for a child. The Ladies of Charity made all the beautiful ornaments under the direction of Sandy O'Connor. The parish responded with contributions of over \$10,000 to buy new bikes. In addition, another 129 new bicycles were donated.

Through tireless efforts new bikes were assembled and delivered to the Guadalupe Center, located in Immokalee, Fla., whose goal is to break the cycle of pov-

erty through education. This first bicycle drive was a huge success with 226 new bikes delivered for Christmas. The children were ecstatic. What a beautiful sight to behold! This was all made possible through the generosity of parishioners.

A second giving tree was decorated to help support St. Matthew's House and the Guadalupe Soup Kitchen. This project too received donations exceeding \$7,000. Again thanks go out to the Ladies of Charity and St. John the Evangelist parishioners for "through him all things are possible." ♦

Giving in Faith and Love

St. Matthias Apostle Parish, Archdiocese of Washington

Deborah Self

Inspired by the theme "Giving in Faith and Love" from the 2012 national assembly, the St. Matthias Ladies of Charity enthusiastically continues its work with the needy and disadvantaged in the community. Fundraisers and the generosity of parishioners and school organizations support several programs.

The members are able to provide nonperishable food items from their weekly pantry to those who come to seek help. Food baskets with complete meals were given to several families at Thanksgiving and Christmas. The parish Christmas Giving Tree supplied gifts for wounded veterans at Walter Reed Bethesda Hospital, as well as to the Gift of Peace, Bowie-Crofton Pregnancy Center, and Prince Georges Medical Center pediatrics and emergency units.

The group adopted a family whose budget had been strained by the special dietary needs of several children, providing them with a grocery gift card each month to help meet

the special needs. Coats have been donated to the Catholic Charities coat drive, monetary gifts given to several charities that have requested help and lunches provided to the parish Community Café.

The Ladies of Charity of St. Mathias feel truly blessed to be a part of such a generous and supportive parish and look forward to continuing their service in the new year. ♦





Answering the Call for a Second Chance

Systemic Change, Just What Fr. Gay is Encouraging
Sister Germaine Sarazin, DC

Have you ever heard someone say, “Just give me a chance?” Sr. Maria Nguyen, DC, has and is working to do just that. She has begun a program to teach sewing and other marketable skills to underprivileged women in the Ogden, Utah, area. Sr. Maria offers a ten week class in sewing to about 10 women at a time. They learn to use commercial machines and there is a project the ladies must sew and model for their graduation. They may then continue to work at the Give Me a Chance (GMAC) center taking advanced classes or working on alterations, jewelry making classes, or special orders. The ladies also work on

English skills and basic business skills so they can start their own home businesses.

Besides the education offered, there is a store where the items are sold and where formal wear as well as First Communion clothing may be purchased. Alterations are a big item and the ladies are paid for their work with only a small portion going to the GMAC.

Sister Maria has purchased an embroidery machine and a quilting machine. At present these are used by only a select few, but when they move into their new larger building, more students will have the opportunity to learn how to use this state-of-the-art equipment. The

new building will also allow for a co-op day care program. Future plans include classes in baking and cake decorating. Sr. Maria was also given an acre of land in the area where she has begun a community garden so the ladies can learn to grow their own fresh produce.

The Ladies of Charity in Salt Lake and Bountiful are happy to support Sr. Maria in her programs by volunteering to work in the store, providing financial aid and setting up opportunities for alterations, and modeling fashions the ladies have made.

For more information, visit the website, gmacstore.com, or contact Sr. Maria at gmacutah@gmail.com to partner and walk the walk in response to those who ask, “Give Me a Chance.”

A Symbolic Gift As Well as a Custom

Kathleen Sieracki



Each outgoing president of LCUSA is offered a Miraculous Medal as a symbol of thanksgiving for her years of service. The front of the medal has the initials “LCUSA” and the back is engraved with “LCUSA President and years served.” The custom began in 1964 with the first president, Diane Ruth Downey, and continued with 16 of her successors. According to Marie Buckley, president 1982-1984, the style of the gift is chosen to depict the personality of the recipient.

The Miraculous Medal, initially named the Medal of the Immaculate Conception, was revealed by the Blessed Mother in an apparition to St. Catherine Laboure, a Daughter of Charity, on November 27, 1830. Following official Church approval a

few years later, devotion to the medal spread rapidly. According to the Association of the Miraculous Medal (AMM), “There is no superstition....connected with the Miraculous Medal. Its greatest miracles are those of patience, forgiveness, repentance, and faith.”

The phrase “O Mary conceived without sin” appears on the front of the medal, and supports the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, which was officially proclaimed in 1854. December 8 is the feast of the Immaculate Conception. It was on December 8, 1617, that St. Vincent’s rules for “The Charities,” the original name of the Ladies of Charity, were approved by the pope, and that date has always been considered the birthday of the organization.

AMM is a branch of the Vincentian Family. Members wear the medal to honor and imitate Mary as a model of Christian living and service. LCUSA presidents are also models of Christian living and service, and thus the Miraculous Medal is a most appropriate gift.

More information is available at <http://amm.org>.

Welcome A-Board



Candidates for the LCUSA board were featured in the summer edition of the *Servicette*. Two additional women have also volunteered to serve. Theresa Ward (*above left*) is a director from the Western Region and Mary Nell Williams (*above right*) fills the same position in the North Central Region. Welcome!

Opportunities to Tell Our Story

Ellie Alont-Messner, Secretary, Elmira, N.Y.

The Ladies of Charity of Elmira filled a table with baked goods and craft items at a fall festival at St. Mary's Church in Elmira. Their goal was to increase awareness of LOC and to raise funds to support their activities throughout the community.



Deborah Sullivan (left), President, Elmira LOC, with local supporters.



Visiting the Seton Center are (from left) Fr. Robert Gielow, Fr. Michael Mulhearn, Fr. Tom Cawley, Fr. Perry Henry, Valerie Horton, Sr. Loretto Marie Colwell, Fr. Gregory Gay, Gayle Johnson and Fr. Richard Gielow. John Caulfield, photographer.

Superior General Visits Kansas City

Early this year, the Rev. Gregory Gay, Superior General of the Confraternity of the Mission, made a canonical visit to the Vincentian priests' and brothers' residences in the western province of the United States. During his trip he also stopped at projects and

sites of other members of the Vincentian Family.

In the course of this first visit to Kansas City Fr. Gay toured the Seton Center food pantry, thrift shop and dental clinic which are currently housed in a temporary location. The permanent site is undergoing a 9000 square foot expansion scheduled for completion in August 2013. The executive director of Seton, Sr. Loretto Marie Colwell, SCL, displayed

the blueprints and described how the additional area will be used. In addition to current programs, space will be provided for a senior center, an alternative high school, meeting rooms to be used by the surrounding community, and facilities for counseling and furnishing emergency help on utility bills.

Accompanying Fr. Gay were Fr. Perry Henry, Fr. Richard Gielow, Fr. Robert Gielow, Fr. Michael Mulhearn and Fr. Tom Cawley. Gayle Johnson, LCUSA president, and Valerie Horton, local Metropolitan Kansas City president, were members of the touring group. touring the facility. ✧

UNSUNG HERO

Cont'd from p. 8

Services manager. "She puts a grin on everyone's face and everyone loves her." John Wirth, a food service employee said, "She is an angel incarnate."

Florence was born and lived in Providence, Utah, until she "married a good-looking Catholic sailor and left." She promised to raise her six children Catholic and prefers to worship in the Catholic Church, although she is not a

member of the faith. "I remember when I was baptized, as I was brought up out of the water them saying there is only one baptism for the forgiveness of sins," she explained. Florence has been attending Our Lady of Lourdes Parish for over 60 years, and supports the church all she can. Her children and grandchildren have all graduated from Catholic elementary and high schools, and one of her daughters is a Holy Cross nun.

Florence worked in the Catholic school lunch program and Catholic high school bookstore for 40 years before retiring in 2008, and during the summer and on school holidays she would serve meals to the poor.

To quote Florence, "As I greet the poor, I see the eyes of Jesus in them and think 'O, but for the grace of God go I,' and when I leave I have a thousand more blessings each day." ✧

HOLIDAY EVENT

Cont'd from p. 1

tion of the party, as well as assisting with the gift distribution. Donations came from all over the country and some from Ladies of Charity. Marie Turgeon from the Washington, D.C., Ladies of Charity had contacted the St. John's association to ask how they could help the people of New York. Their generosity arrived in the form of a \$500 check to be put towards Sandy relief. Armed with those funds, Marge Cashin, president of the LOC/STJ (*at the time*) and her two daughters went shopping for arts and crafts supplies to keep 500 children occupied for a portion of the party. The projects included making snowman decorations and putting together "reindeer food" to guide Santa's sleigh to the children of Rockaway, a neighborhood in Queens. Mary Ann Dantuono, Marie Fouche, Mary Ellen Freeley, joined by her husband Bill, and Joan Kuruc, a new member to be installed in January, were part of the gift giving group. As the families arrived, Marie greeted them and directed them to the proper table to pick up their gifts which had been sent to "Secret Sandy." The children and their parents were treated to a delicious hot meal, gifts and entertainment. "This was such a wonderful way to spend the day," commented Mary Ann Dantuono. "Helping in this effort was so uplifting and rewarding because it was so well organized and included so many individuals and groups working together. I am so glad we had the opportunity to provide some happiness for families so affected by the storm." Most of the little peninsula of Rockaway off the east coast of New York had been completely destroyed by the storm and most families lost everything. The children were so happy to see toys again. They were also happy to have decorations, as all their Christmas items had been washed into the Atlantic.

The funds left over from the generosity of two LOC associations will be used to purchase items which are still needed and in such short supply for these families of Rockaway and other



Mary Ellen Freeley (left) and Marge Cashin

areas of Queens. It will be many, many months and possibly years before the area recovers.

Thanks to all who made the project such a success! ♦

ASSEMBLY KEYNOTE *Cont'd from p. 1*

Dr. Woo feels CRS works on behalf of Catholics in the United States to put action behind the gospel command to love our neighbors. "With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right," —she lives those words shared by President Lincoln in 1865. She, too, is a source of hope for others, making the world a better place.

At the national assembly in San Jose, Calif., September 20-21, you will want to join Ladies of Charity from around the country to hear her words, experience her energy and learn more about CRS. Sr. Margaret Keaveney, DC, president and chief executive officer of St. Vincent's, a social services provider in Santa Barbara, will also be a featured speaker.

Take heart in the nature of your distinct ministries within our association and celebrate your amazing contributions to the building of God's kingdom. God's workplace is any workplace, which means our workplace is God's. ♦

*Some material for this article was taken from the

CRS website www.crs.org

JLOC

Cont'd from p. 7

LCUSA, the Junior Ladies of Charity at St. Mary's has continued successfully to this day. Rachel Loecher is the current president, leading about 30 members. Marian Snyder and Diane Stottele are the moderators.

An annual bake sale supports a variety of service projects, including holiday visits and gifts for nursing home residents; working with children in the parish; volunteering at a soup kitchen, food pantry and at Ronald McDonald House; collecting Halloween costumes and treat bags for children in shelters; adopting immigrant families at Christmas; holding a weekend collection of household goods from parishioners in support of the Fresh Start program of the diocesan Ladies of Charity; collecting personal care items and cleaning supplies for single parent families; assisting with a fundraiser for adults with developmental disabilities; and helping the annual clean-up at the St. Vincent de Paul Camp.

New members are recruited through Mass and bulletin announcements, the Parish school and religious education program, and an annual ice cream social. Inductions are held once a year during a parish weekend Mass. New members receive pins.

Moderator Marian Snyder is happy to answer any question for those interested in starting a JLOC. She can be reached by email at mariansnyder33@gmail.com. ♦

JLOC Charm Available

Silver charms with the symbols of faith, hope and charity and suitable for bracelets or necklaces are available through the LCUSA national service center. A chain is not included. The charms are made in the USA and are appropriate for current Juniors and for new members at their induction. ♦



Memorials and Honorariums

Both the persons named below and the donors will be remembered at a special Mass said by LCUSA's national spiritual advisor, Fr. Richard Gielow, CM. Please send your donation with the identifying information to the National Service Center.

Memorial and Honorary Remembrances Links to the Mystical Body of Christ

Dear Ladies of Charity,

Each time I receive a list of names for special remembrances, I offer Mass for them. Following the Mass, their names are placed in the chapel of the Vincentian Parish Mission Center in Independence, Mo., where we resident priests pray for them throughout the year.

It's important to remember those who have died as well as those who are in need of special prayers due to illness or tragedy. Our prayerful remembrance links us as one in the mystical body of Christ. We are always united in prayer.

So rest assured that when a Lady of Charity requests a memorial for a loved one, it is taken very prayerfully and the perfect gift of a Mass is offered for the intention.

God bless you all.
Rev. Richard Gielow, CM
National Spiritual Advisor

IN MEMORIAM ~Dorothea Mc Elduff~



Photo courtesy Staten Island Advance.

Dorothea was very dedicated to her position as president of the Ladies of Charity of the Archdiocese of New York, serving for ten years. She was a member of the LCUSA board from 2003-2008, the last two years as northeastern regional vice-president. Dorothea died suddenly on January 27. May she rest in peace.

2012 Annual Appeal Is Ongoing

Don't let the calendar stand in your way. It is still possible to donate to LCUSA's 2012 Annual Appeal. Funds received are used to support local associations and to provide emergency responses to worldwide tragedies. Most recently, through your generosity to the 2011 Annual Appeal, LCUSA donated \$5000 to the Sisters of Charity of New York City for emergency help to victims of Hurricane Sandy. No donation is too small. Please designate Annual Appeal on your check and mail it to the LCUSA National Service Center. Thank you for believing and being part of LCUSA's mission in responding to the needs of our brothers and sisters.

† MEMORIALS †	
In Memory of	Bequeathed by
Carol Balet	Carly Donnelly
Olive Braun	Krieg DeVault LLP
Kathleen Coco	Robert Agee Connie O'Brien Lucy Saunders Kathleen Sieracki
Irene Ebner	LOC, Morgan Hill
Catherine Patricia Hanson	Mary Beth O'Brien
John Harris	Dorothy Jordan
Pat & Nadine Kaine	LOC, Lake Travis
Joseph Kenihan	Mary Kenihan
Maureen O'Brien Kourtz & James K. O'Brien	Mary O'Brien
Dorothea McElduff	Lucy Saunders Kathleen Sieracki
Ann Regan	Judith Montgomery
Albert Siedlarczyk	Elaine Colangelo & Nick Buccasio Doris Leskovich Elena Miranda Mary Ann Morovitz Connie O'Brien Kathleen Sieracki
Lillian Sullivan & Ralph Traynor	Jean Traynor
William Francis Voll	LOC, Lake Travis
Honore Zettlemoyer	Mary Kenihan

† IN HONOR OF †	
Sister Claire Debes, DC	Lucy Saunders
Peggy Frame	Eleanor Warzoha*
Sister Mary Grace Higgins, DC	Lucy Saunders
Sally Johnson	Eleanor Warzoha*
Suzanne Johnson	Eleanor Warzoha*
Madonna Kirchner	Lucy Saunders
Mary Beth Legg	Eleanor Warzoha*
Monica Mize	Lucy Saunders
Eileen Nowak	Kathleen Sieracki
Honore Marie Zettlemoyer	Mary Kenihan

*Editor apologizes for reversing the donor and honorees in the last issue.

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AIC USA

<http://aic.ladiesofcharity.us>

“To serve rather than to be served”

Elizabeth Ann Seton: America’s First Carol Schumer, D.C.



Betty Bayley, Betsy, Elizabeth, Eliza, Mrs. Seton, Mother Seton and Saint Elizabeth Ann are all names associated with the first American woman Vincentian. Never officially a Lady of Charity, as a young wife, Elizabeth Ann ministered to persons who were poor and sick, becoming known as a “Protestant Sister of Charity.” However, in her own words, “I will always be a mother to my five children ... I must be a mother ... first of all.” (Grunwell, page 82) And this responsibility defined her life.

Born a week before the First Continental Congress, into a prominent New York, Episcopalian family, Elizabeth was the second daughter of British supporter and college professor, Richard Bayley and Catherine Charlton. In 1777, her mother succumbed in child birth. Then two years later, Kit, this baby sister died, leaving Elizabeth bereft. This was just the start of her experiences with

suffering and death. Elizabeth’s childhood years were filled with challenges, especially after her father remarried and she was not accepted by the “new” Mrs. Bayley.

When Elizabeth was 20 years old, she married William McGee Seton, a wealthy young merchant, and together they reared five children. Their first years of marriage were the happiest of Elizabeth’s life. However, in 1798, Will’s father died and the young couple became guardians of her husband’s seven half-brothers and sisters and in charge of the family’s importing company. When the business went bankrupt, the pressure took a toll on her husband’s health. As a result, in 1802, William, Elizabeth and their oldest daughter, Anna, traveled to Italy to stay with the Filicchis, Catholic business associates. However, William died of tuberculosis, the family illness, six weeks later. Delayed in her return to the United States, due to illness and weather, the young widow sought refuge in her faith and longed to be united with the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Back in New York, she struggled with her choice of religion. Finally, in 1805, she was received into the Catholic Church – a decision which greatly strained her relationship with her Episcopalian family and friends.

Destitute and needing to support herself and her children, in 1808 Elizabeth accepted an invitation from Archbishop John Carroll to move to Baltimore and begin a school for girls. Soon, joined by

others, she formed a religious community. Using her translation of St. Vincent de Paul’s rules for the Daughters, Mother Seton adapted these for her Sisters of Charity of St. Joseph in Emmitsburg, Md. Thus she helped sow the seeds for women in the Vincentian Family of the United States.

Their early years in the valley brought great hardship in lack of resources, winter weather and death. Through it all, Elizabeth and her Sisters devoted themselves to teaching, with a special concern for poor families. In the end, she contracted tuberculosis and died on January 4, 1821 at the age of 46.

She was canonized in 1975, as the first native-born North American Saint.



- ▶ What does Elizabeth Ann’s life invite me to personally ponder?
- ▶ +Does being a mother, a Vincentian-servant define my life?
- ▶ How?

Sources : Grunwell, Jeanne Marie, *Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton, Daughter of America*, 1999, page 85
Untener, Ken; Haven Catherine, ed.; *The Little Blue Book, Advent and Christmas 2012-2013*, 1/4/13