



COLLABORATING ON OUR MISSION

GAYLE JOHNSON

"Let us work with a new love in service of the poor, looking for the most destitute and abandoned among them."

—St. Vincent

In the spirit of current dismal economic times and in the tradition of St. Vincent, we, the Ladies of Charity, are challenged to be more effective. Happily, our efforts are not in isolation. Vincent and Louise creatively founded 'something for everyone' in their efforts to serve the poor. Today, we have the legacy of our founders in the Vincentian Family to provide spiritual, moral and financial support, not only to those served in a variety of ways, but to one another.



The story of how 'our family' came to be is a recent one considering the work of Vincent has been part of our nation's history from 1857.

In 1986, when the St. Vincent de Paul Society met at Notre Dame, what we now know as the U.S. Vincentian Family had its beginnings. The familiar FAMVIN website was created in 1998. But it was at Los Altos, California in 1999 that mem-

Continued — see Mission, p. 8

LCUSA LEADERSHIP TEAM CANDIDATES FOR 2013–2014



Gayle Johnson

During the closing liturgy of the upcoming national assembly, Gayle Johnson of Kansas City will be installed as president of LCUSA for a two year term beginning January 1st, 2013. After her retirement in 2000 from a career as a mathematics teacher, Gayle joined the Ladies of Charity, continuing her earlier volunteer work and following in the footsteps of her mother, who was a Lady of Charity for over thirty years.

Gayle brings a broad range of experience to the new position. During her presidency of the Kansas City association she organized two conferences to educate members on generational poverty and human trafficking. Elected to the LCUSA board in 2006, she was vice-president for the north central region for four years, chair of the membership committee and president elect for the last two years. She is a member of the national Vincentian Family Collaborators, and was elected to the executive board of the International Association of Charities (AIC) in 2011.

Widowed after 48 years of marriage, Gayle has four children and seven grandchildren. Fulfilling a long held dream, Gayle recently spent a month in Italy learning her grandmother's native language. Read Gayle's article in this issue, "Collaborating On Our Mission" to learn more about her goals for LCUSA.

Earlier this year, local association presidents were invited to nominate candidates for board officers and regional directors. Their recommendations were considered, along with the insights of the LCUSA nominations committee. This collaborative process led to the following candidates. Delegates, following consultation with other members of their associations, will vote on the slate of officers during the business meeting on Saturday, September 15th.

CANDIDATES

Mary Ann Dantuono, the candidate for LCUSA's president elect, has worked on poverty issues throughout her career, especially as they affect women, as well as on building strong



Mary Ann Dantuono

Continued — see Elections p. 4



Children in Crisis

AIC in Ukraine
Page 10



Junior LOC Newscast

Page 11



Assembly Speakers & Schedule

Pages 13 & 15

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.



ARE YOU MOVING?

Be sure to report any changes of address to the LCUSA National Service Center so you don't miss any issues of the *Servicette*.



National Service Center Hours
 Mon–Thur., 7 AM–4 PM Central time



Three Seconds

Bishop David A. Zubik
Episcopal Chairman

Three seconds! On any clock, three seconds seems fleeting as if nothing of real time. Or is it? As a matter of fact, it can be the difference between life here and life in the hereafter!

After celebrating Mass with a local Catholic organization, I set out for home. I decided to take a shortcut through downtown Pittsburgh and came to an intersection. The traffic light was red. When the light turned green, I slowly pulled out, only to become the victim of a hit-and-run accident. Someone with a vehicle traveling at a significant rate of speed plowed across the front of my Ford, sending the entire front of my vehicle a half-block away.

I really didn't know what hit me. Witnesses remarked that the other vehicle was traveling so fast that they really couldn't give a description of it. Stunned, I called 911. The police arrived within minutes.

One police officer looked at me and my severely damaged vehicle. He simply said: "Bishop, you're a mighty lucky man. Had you been three seconds sooner, you'd be a goner."

Three seconds! On any clock, three seconds seems fleeting as if nothing of real time. Or is it?

When I finally arrived at my apartment, I went to the chapel. Over and over again, I replayed the words of the police officer: "Bishop, you're a mighty lucky man. Had you been three seconds sooner, you'd be a goner."

As I sat in front of the Blessed Sacrament, I thought of many things:

- ▶ I could have been dead, but was very much alive and not injured.
- ▶ I thought of whoever hit me and

hoped that they were not hurt.

- ▶ I thought of my mom, who died in 2006, and realized God used her as my guardian angel again.
- ▶ I thought of God and how he must still have things in mind for me to do.
- ▶ I thought of what that work which God intends might be and how much I need to embrace that work and God's will.
- ▶ I thought about how close I had come to death's door and asked myself whether I, as a sinner, was prepared to cross the bridge to the hereafter.

The impact of what happened remains with me profoundly. I suspect it will for a long time to come.

In sharing this story with you, I can't help but think of the line from Jesus: "You know not the hour." None of us does! But we all must remember that this place we occupy on earth is not the end of the line. God is the end of the line. Being with God in the hereafter can only happen by being with God here. You and I can't afford to put off until tomorrow what God wants of us today.

Yes, it really is true: *Three seconds! On any clock, three seconds seems fleeting as if nothing of real time. Or is it? As a matter of fact, it can be the difference between life here and life in the hereafter!*

Pray God that you and I may live well the first and always be prepared for the second. †

SERVICETTE NEWS DEADLINE

The deadline to submit articles and photos for inclusion in the Fall issue of the *SERVICETTE*:

Monday, September 17, 2012

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

Please contact us for info.



President's Message

Lucy Ann Saunders
LCUSA President

Where have the first six months of this year gone? Summer is almost over bringing us closer to celebrating LCUSA's 12th Annual National Assembly in September. I hope your plans have been made because the Archdiocese of Washington Ladies of Charity (AWLOC) is more than ready for your arrival. The tours and registration numbers are very positive and excitement has surrounded the planning committees. The welcome mat is out for all.

In mentioning the AWLOC and as a member, I would like to brag just a little about the history of this amazing and spirit-filled diocesan association. To coincide with the national assembly, the AWLOC will be celebrating its 50th Anniversary even though the District of Columbia Ladies of Charity assisted Catholic Charities in their Milk Fund project as early as 1931. The work of caring for children was begun by the Daughters of Charity in the Archdiocese of Washington during 1825 by establishing St. Vincent's Home and School. The phrase "admission policy" was unknown. In 1934, St. Vincent's Auxiliary was reactivated to assist the Daughters of Charity. This group became Ladies of Charity, consisting of approximately 300 members. St. Ann's Infant Asylum (known by this name in the early 1900's) was aided by the Ladies of Charity starting off with a successful linen shower to fill the almost empty closets of St. Ann's first maternity hospital. In 1924, Margaret Barrett, a school teacher, organized a Junior Ladies of Charity. Miss Barrett became a Sister of Charity, serving in Baltimore. Miss Irene Stack served as Ladies of Charity president for 31 years until term limits were established. WOW!! What credit Irene deserves as

well as all the ladies who showed their spirit and determination to serve during these early years.

Later other associations were formed in the nearby counties. Prince George's County had their first unit conference of Ladies of Charity in 1931. St. Mary's County LOC formed in 1940. Montgomery County LOC held its first meeting on June 20, 1963 at St. Jane de Chantal. Charles County LOC was established in 1964. Ladies of Charity at Large was organized for women whose parishes did not have an LOC unit and held its first meeting on August 1966. Calvert County LOC was established on Ascension Thursday in May 1968.

This history provides the AWLOC much pride and enthusiasm to carry on the work that these women so readily took on themselves because they cared for those in need during critical times in our nation's history. In 1966, Mrs. Carmine S. Bellini, executive director for the Archdiocese LOC, wrote to her membership using the heading: *The AWLOC Family comes of Age with Parochial, County, Association, Archdiocesan, National and International Responsibilities.*

Her letter read: "We wish to make our organization the best, so we put forth our greatest effort in order to succeed. In conclusion to answer Why an ALCUS? [former name of LCUSA] and Why a Central Council? [former name of AWLOC], we quote from page 43 of our manual: The interchange of ideas educates, widens experience. The closer the union between the associations, the more vigorous and faithful in good works their spiritual life will become, because they will be an encouragement to each other; they will keep their proper spirit and function with more uniformity. It is in the spirit of Humility, Simplicity, Charity, the hallmark of the Ladies of Charity all over the world, that we join hands as members of the family of our founding father, St. Vincent de Paul, whose directive, 'To practice the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Man' is our legacy."

To conclude my bragging on the AWLOC, I will end with a quote given by the Rt. Rev. Msgr. James A. Caulfield, from a homily at the 1968 Annual Communion Mass: "Before governments were concerned with the needs and wants of the poor as a matter of policy; before words like 'involvement,' 'commitment,' 'encounter,' enjoyed the popularity or had the same connotation they have today; you Ladies of Charity were putting into practice what these words describe – anticipating as you did, modern social action by 350 years."

Ladies this is our time and place to continue these works so we too provide history that someone someday will write and pass on to others. You are invited to become a part of LCUSA's history by attending the 12th Annual National Assembly here in the Archdiocese of Washington. I look forward to seeing you in September. †

Dates to Remember

- September 14–15, 2012**
LCUSA National Assembly
Archdiocese of Washington, DC
Hyatt Regency, Bethesda, Md.
- September 27, 2012**
Feast of St. Vincent de Paul
- October 11–12, 2012**
Vincenian Family Leadership Meeting
New Orleans
- November 10, 2012**
St. Louis Archdiocesan Ladies of Charity Retreat
- November 17, 2012**
Vincenian Day
Buffalo, NY
- February 10–13, 2013**
Catholic Social Ministry Gathering
Washington, DC
- March 13–19, 2013**
AIC Delegate Assembly
Bangkok, Thailand
- April 10–14, 2012**
LCUSA Spring Board Meeting
- September 18–22, 2013**
LCUSA National Assembly
San Jose, Calif.

Send info for the calendar to: LCSTLOUIS@AOL.COM

organizations to engage in that work. For the past 15 years, she has been the associate director of the Vincentian Center for Church and Society, at St. John's University, N.Y. Mary Ann serves as an expert on women's issues for the Holy See Permanent Observer Mission to the United Nations.

A charter member of the St. John's Ladies of Charity Association in 2009, Mary Ann began her service on the LCUSA board the same year as a northeast regional director. She serves as chair of the Advocacy Committee and is a member of the Human Resource and Nomination Committees. Mary Ann actively supports the School Sisters of Notre Dame Educational Center, a GED/English as a Second Language program for adult women. Named as a consultant to the Vincentian Family Collaborators to organize a North American Convening on Systemic Change in 2010, she continues to serve with the Collaborators.

Prior to her position at St. John's University, Mary Ann was the director of Legal Affairs and Public Policy at Catholic Charities, Diocese of Rockville Centre, N.Y. She has served on the boards of human service and advocacy organizations, including the Social Policy Committee of Catholic Charities USA.

A native New Yorker, Mrs. Dantuono earned her B.A. at Fordham University and a Law degree at St. John's University. She and her husband, Michael, are the proud parents of three married children and a grandson.

The Ladies of Charity USA stands at the "threshold of the future," approaching in 2017 the 400th anniversary of its founding by St. Vincent de Paul and seeks to integrate systemic change approaches to its ministries. Mary Ann embraces that future brightened by Vincentian women of courage, competence and creativity, working together to alleviate conditions of poverty.



Debbie Chadwick

Debbie Chadwick is the candidate for secretary of the LCUSA Board of Directors. She has previously served on the board as a southern regional director, chair of the finance committee and treasurer. Debbie has been a member of the Ladies of Charity in Nashville, Tenn., for over twenty years, holding many leadership positions. In 2010, she and Ann Singelyn

were co-chairs of the national assembly held in Nashville to commemorate the 100th anniversary of their association.

She is president of the Rochelle Center, a nonprofit agency supporting 115 adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities through community based and meaningful day programming, work training and community supported living. A member of St. Edward's parish, she served as the first parish and school development director. She and Charles, her husband of thirty-six years, have four sons, two daughters-in-law, and three grandchildren.

Describing her commitment, Debbie has written: "Ladies of Charity is the path that each of us has chosen to make a difference in the world. We follow the remarkable footsteps of those who came before us while keeping the path moving and open for those who will in turn follow us. I am honored to work with such a dedicated group of women who continue our mission in the spirit of Vincent and Louise; together we will make a difference as we serve others."

Suzanne Johnson, candidate for LCUSA treasurer, joined the Los Angeles Ladies of Charity Association in 1998. Over the past fourteen years, she has served in many capacities, currently holding the office of president. She had known about the Ladies through her mother, Doris Hoag, a Lady of Charity and former LCUSA board member. Suzanne "valiantly resisted" her mother's urgings to become a Lady of Charity but answered "yes" when invited to join the Ladies of Los Angeles.



Suzanne Johnson

Believing education is the path from poverty, she volunteers as a tutor at Our Lady of Talpa School in East Los Angeles. Recently, she was proud to attend the graduation of a boy she had begun tutoring in second grade. He will be the first in his family to attend high school.

Suzanne was elected to the national board in September, 2010, serving as western regional vice president and a member of the Finance and Development Committee. She earned a B.S.B.A. in Accounting and has worked in management positions as chief financial officer. Most recently, she was business manager for her parish, Holy Angels, in Arcadia, Calif.

In 2010, she graduated from University of La Verne College of Law, passed the California Bar Exam and was sworn in as an attorney. Suzanne hopes to serve the poor as an immigration attorney, and spends three hours a week working with the Los Angeles County Immigration Legal Assistance Project. Suzanne states she is "fully committed to LCUSA working in conjunction with the other Vincentian Family members to eradicate poverty through systemic change—a hand up, rather than a handout."

Each of the five geographical regions of LCUSA may have three directors on the national board. One of the directors serves as regional vice-president. During the regional meetings at the assembly, delegates will elect the directors for their



Francine Hovanec



Peggy Keene



Rita Robinson



Kathy Coco



Donna Montague



Joan Stanard



Marilyn Martone



Kathy Kavanaugh



Kathleen Sieracki

respective regions, and then elect a regional vice-president. The list of candidates follows.

Middle Atlantic Region: Francine Hovanec, Diocese of Pittsburgh; Peggy Keene, Diocese of Pittsburgh; Rita Robinson, Archdiocese of Washington.

North Central Region: Kathy Coco, St. Vincent de Paul/Guardian Angel, St. Louis; Donna Montague, Metro Kansas City; Joan Stanard, St. Vincent de Paul/Guardian Angel, St. Louis.

Northeastern Region: Marilyn Martone, St. John's University;

Kathy Kavanaugh, Diocese of Albany; Kathleen Sieracki, Diocese of Buffalo.

Southern Region: Sue Ann Gilman, Diocese of Dallas; Winona Nelson, St. Jude Ladies of Charity, Montgomery, Ala; Lucky Van De Gejuchte, Diocese of Nashville.

Western Region: Marge Fiala, Morgan Hill, Calif; Mary Beth Legg, Archdiocese of Los Angeles.

Thanks are due to all the women who have volunteered to serve in leadership positions. Let us keep them in our prayers. †



Sue Ann Gilman



Winona Nelson



Lucky Van De Gejuchte



Marge Fiala

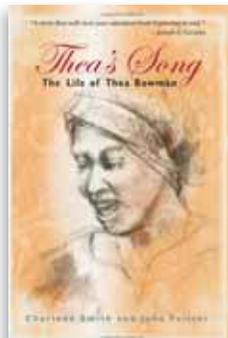


Mary Beth Legg

Sister Thea Bowman, Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration

Gloria Rose
Archdiocese of Washington

Thea's Song, by Charlene Smith and John Feister, chronicles the life of the first African-American nun in a white convent. The history of her life extends all over the world.



Thea was born Bertha Bowman in Yazoo City, Miss., a descendant of a family of freed slaves. She converted to Roman Catholicism at the age of nine. At the age of 15, Bertha joined the

Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration at La Crosse, Wis., where she attended Viterbo University. She earned a Ph.D. in English Language and Literature at Catholic University of America.

Sister Thea taught at the elementary and high school levels before going on to teach at the Catholic University of America, in Washington, D.C., Xavier University, in New Orleans, and Viterbo University, her alma mater.

Sister Thea's strong desire was to teach all people to love each other. Her basic concerns and presentations focused on loving others of different cultures. She stated that "Insofar as we love one another, insofar as we come together to help one another, we prepare for change. We can help one another to be co-creators of a new world in which we tolerate the boundaries of class, race, education, and money." She was successful in working with people from Latin

America, Asia, African-Americans and white Catholics. Despite recurring illness, she continued her journey and received countless awards nationally, regionally and locally.

The Pope and bishops were enthralled by her. She constantly encouraged the need for black Catholics to enjoy their cultural strengths and their Catholic faith. She was a gifted vocalist and speaker. She spoke, sang and danced her message internationally, which gave her the name "Sister of the World." Many Catholics in the Washington Archdiocese can recount the spiritual joy in having worked and participated in her many activities during her tenure there.

Thea's Song is a book that will inspire you beyond your greatest expectations. It reveals the life of a woman, a Catholic and black individual with unshakeable faith. Sister Thea died March 30, 1990, at age 52. †

LCUSA PRESIDENT'S



TRAVEL DIARY

Lucy Ann Saunders ~ President

On the Road Again: The Middle Atlantic Region

I am happy to share my travels, showing we are not alone in the service rendered to those less fortunate.



St. Cecilia's Ladies of Charity, Baltimore, Md

In November I attended the Providence Hospital LOC meeting in Washington, D.C. There I met their new Spiritual Moderator, Sister Sandra Goldsborough, D.C. The members are very much involved, each in her unique profession, serving employees and their families. Meetings take place after work as most commute from the suburbs. There is a strong presence of these ladies in the hospital. Each Monday morning, a prayer and reflection are e-mailed out to members affording them a special start to the work week.



L to R (seated): Pittsburgh LOC: Linda Fry, Lucy Saunders, Donna Churray (President); Mary Shepard. Standing (left to right): Sister Carole Blazine, S.C.; Francine Hovanec; Peggy Keene; Peggy Shafer



Debbie Lancaster (left) and Kelly Borsuk of Cumberland Ladies of Charity deliver clothing, hygiene products and a check to Robin Fazenbaker (center), director of the YMCA housing program.

At the end of March, traveling by car to Pittsburgh allowed me to make a few stops along the way. First stop was to have lunch with some of the Cumberland LOC working at the Western Maryland Health System. As always, they are very much into serving their local community and hospital. Fund raising for their charities is a big part of what they do and with the hospital's permission are fortunate to have use of that facility. The Daughters of Charity worked with them to assign a Spiritual Moderator as they are located in an area away from the larger cities or towns. This is a beautiful area surrounded by the mountains of Western Maryland.

Next stop was Uniontown St. Mary Nativity, Pa., Sister of Charity Annette Frey's home where I would spend the night and meet with several associations. They included Connellsville, Smock, Masontown and Uniontown St. John's. That evening



Uniontown Ladies of Charity preparing for a speaker on Human Trafficking. Seated (left to right): Ann Horvath, Agnes Yablunosky, Lorraine Kusnier, Josephine Abersold, Mary Smolley. Standing, Mary Kubiak, Jen Soisson (speaker) and Sr. Annette Frey, S.C.

I met with board member Lydia Noche. Sister and Lydia did much to prepare for Friday's meeting with the ladies. Regional VP Francine Hovanec joined us for the meeting, where we learned about their ministries and service to each of their communities. A very rewarding morning was spent with a wonderful group of ladies who carry out the mission of St. Vincent and St. Louise daily.

After leaving Uniontown, I traveled to spend the Pittsburgh weekend with Peggy Shafer, former LCUSA board officer. Peggy would be my host for the Pittsburgh visit. Friday evening we had dinner with some of Pittsburgh's board members. Mary Shepard, former regional vice president, was in attendance. Everywhere I have been the ladies and their members have been more than gracious seeing that I was welcomed and felt at home as I met with each of their associations.

Saturday, I attended the Ladies of Charity Diocese of Pittsburgh 53rd Investiture at St. Paul's Cathedral. There were over 100 members being received into this diocesan association. Following the investiture, there was a luncheon with over 300 in attendance. I was amazed at the number of ladies present and inspired by the homily given by the Most Rev. William John Waltersheid, Auxiliary Bishop. Hearing the words of the bishop was evidence that the clergy in the Diocese of Pittsburgh



Left: Kansas City Ladies of Charity preparing lunches for Urban Rangers.

Ladies of Charity and the Urban Rangers: Helping Those Who Serve Others

Jana Cirincione
Kansas City

Located in central Kansas City, the Urban Ranger Corps was founded by the Rev. John Wandless to help at-risk youth plan for their futures through work and career planning. Incorporated in 2003, the Urban Rangers launched its first summer work experience and leadership program two years later.

Fr. Wandless aims to connect young people in his program with helpful indi-

viduals. The mission of the Corps is to help prepare at-risk city youth (14–18) for wholesome, responsible and productive futures through a program of disciplined work experience and service in their community, leadership development and individualized planning for post-high school careers.

The Corps offers summer and year-round programs. In the summer, young people are assigned to a work team of six rangers to restore the yards of homes owned by low-income families, espe-

cially the homes of seniors or households headed by a single parent. Rangers work four days per week for nine weeks during the summer to learn important pre-employment skills (“Be on time, dress appropriately, and speak respectfully”). Several teams of Ladies of Charity prepare lunches for the work teams, assuring they are well fed as they go to work each day.

In September, the year-round phase of Individual Career Plan (ICP) Management/ Coaching begins. This phase varies depending upon the ICP developed for each ranger during the summer phase. The ICP manager or coach meets with rangers on a bi-weekly basis to ensure they are carrying out the action steps set forth in their ICPs. The coach encourages Rangers to continue working on their planned post-high school pathways through tutoring, mentoring, career planning, and exploration activities.

Visit www.urckc.org to learn more about the Urban Ranger Corps. †



ADVOCACY CONNECTIONS Calling All Ladies of Charity Attorneys

Jeanne M. Vinal

As Catholics, we’re called to share our time, talents and treasures with the church and our brothers and sisters. As Ladies of Charity, we follow in the footsteps of St. Vincent de Paul and dedicate ourselves to the needs of people living in poverty. As attorneys, we dedicate ourselves to serving justice in the representation of the individual client. With these three callings in mind, let us begin to advocate through Ladies of Charity to assist the poor in finding appropriate legal representation, and when there is no paid representation, then to serve where we can.

There are two aspects of this mission. The first is to act as a clearing house for established avenues of help. For example,

our firm handles New York State No Fault claims for most attorneys in our Western New York area (and across the state, too). For people without attorneys (e.g., one-car accidents), we do make a significant difference for those who are wrongfully denied lost wages, medical reimbursements or payments. Frequently, those who have been helped have come into our office with tears of joy and later came back relieved that they will not be evicted and can now pay their bills, etc.

The second aspect of this mission is for cases where there is no established representation source available. We as Ladies of Charity can play a role as a “Lady Lawyer of Charity” pledging to take one pro bono case a year. If you are an attorney and interested, please contact Jeanne M. Vinal to help in this exciting project. †

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bers of the Confraternity of the Missions, Daughters of Charity provincials, and leaders from both Ladies of Charity and the St. Vincent de Paul Society came together to plan how to ‘work with a new love in service of the poor.’ The next year, Father Robert Maloney, C.M., called on the Vincentian Family worldwide to work together to fulfill its mission to those living in poverty.

In 2001 the original U.S. committee met to formulate the mission that is still the driving force today.

The mission of the National Vincentian Family Formulators Committee is to promote collaboration in the Vincentian Family to develop our shared Vincentian spirituality of Charity and Justice.

From this mission grew four goals:

- ▶ Support of the development of spiritual advisors for the Society and the Ladies
- ▶ Develop resources for use in Vincentian formation
- ▶ Plan for Family gatherings regionally and nationally
- ▶ Collaborate whenever possible¹

When the Federation of Sisters of Charity joined in 2004 the Vincentian Family became complete.

The goal for family gatherings was first realized in 2005 in Belleville, Ill. Subsequent gatherings have taken place in Princeton, N.J. (2006), San Francisco, (2007), New Orleans, (2008), Detroit, (2009), Belleville, Ill. (2010) and Indianapolis, (2011).

In 2007, following the challenge of Fr. Gregory Gay to better serve the needs of those living in poverty through “the vision of Systemic Change,” the Vincentian Family Collaborators adopted four goals:

- ▶ To promote collaboration among the Family in the areas of advocacy, formation, youth and the youth movement
- ▶ To develop our shared spirituality of charity and justice
- ▶ To call others to assume leadership responsibility
- ▶ To communicate with the various leaders of the Vincentian Family to invite their participation and support of collaborative initiatives

At the annual 2008 meeting, it was determined that “The Mission of the Vincentian Family Collaborators is to promote collaboration among those who share our Vincentian call to be in solidarity with and for persons who are poor.” Additional goals gave substance to this call for collaboration.

- ▶ Create, identify and celebrate models of collaboration
- ▶ Facilitate communication within the Family
- ▶ Develop and promote annual Family gatherings based on Systemic Change²

The 2009 and 2010 meetings’ focus was to explore the use of systemic change in our service to the underserved. The Family included youth and those we serve in the annual meetings. Impressively, participation was expanded in the 2010 annual meeting when it became a virtual meeting. That technology was included in the April meeting this year along with Vincentian youth and cell phone technology.³

The Ladies of Charity have been and continue to be active partners in the Vincentian Family. In order for our own mem-

bership to know and experience the collaborative direction, educating our members on the concept of changing the systems that force people into poverty and keep them there is paramount. Our annual meetings are one way to do this. Regional meetings, two planned in the Northeast this year, will focus on this theme as well. Our leadership is supporting trainers and content development so that the message, whether delivered in three hour, five hour or one and a half days will be meaningful. The plan is to expand workshops to other regions in 2013. In addition to the *Servicette*, Maureen McMillan in our St. Louis office will provide dates and locations.

The Ladies of Charity, in partnership with others in the Vincentian Family, are looking for new ways to reach out with new love in service to people living in poverty. Our goal is to continue the good work begun by Vincent and Louise in a manner relevant to our challenging times. †

^{1, 2, 3} For additional history and information visit www.FamVin.org

Memorials and Honorariums

Both the persons named below and the donors will be remembered at a special Mass said by our National Spiritual Advisor, the Rev. Richard Gielow, C.M. Please use the envelope enclosed in this newsletter to submit your own intention.

† MEMORIALS †	
<i>In Memory of</i>	<i>Bequeathed by</i>
Rick Aboussie	Eileen Mulaney
Sr. Constance Casey	Gayle Johnson
Sr. Constance Casey	Albe McGurk
Sally Corteville	Suzanne Johnson
Lillian Nichter	Kathleen Sieracki
Joseph Oxler, Sr.	Gayle Johnson
Edwin Pesnel	Veronica Blendell
Dr. M. Edwin Pesnel	Connie O'Brien
Anne Scripps	Veronica Blendell
Ralph Traynor and Lillian Sullivan	Jean Traynor
Veronica Walterich	Kathleen Sieracki
Margaret Wessol	Carol Kowalski
John Gilman	LCUSA
Todd Kazmierski	LCUSA

LCUSA NEWS

CELEBRATING TOGETHER
ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON
Toni K. Gaines

The Archdiocese of Washington Ladies of Charity (AWLOC) celebrated its annual Communion Brunch on March 14th at St. Jane Frances de Chantal Church in Bethesda, Md. The celebrant for the Mass was the Most Rev. Barry C. Knestout, auxiliary bishop of Washington, and the concelebrants were the Rev. Monsignor Donald S. Essex, pastor of St. Jane Frances de Chantal and the Rev. Carl F. Dianda, spiritual advisor for the Ladies of Charity. D. Michelle Williams was the keynote speaker from Catholic Charities Sanctuaries for Life. She spoke on the right to life and how her agency encourages pro-life activities. At the conclusion of the



Maryann Rooney, President, AWLOC, presenting certificate to Margaret Callaghan (outgoing treasurer)

brunch, Maryann Rooney, president of AWLOC, presented Father Dianda and Margaret Callaghan with Certificates of Appreciation for their many years of dedicated service as spiritual advisor and

treasurer, respectively. Everyone gave them a roaring round of applause for their untiring service.

AWLOC held its annual May Day fundraiser with the crowning of the Blessed Mother at St. Ann's Infant and Maternity Home on May 5th. Father Dianda was the principal celebrant of the Mass. Deborah Self was selected to crown the Blessed Mother. Following Mass, the ladies enjoyed a delicious luncheon provided by the ladies of Prince George's county; desserts furnished by the District of Columbia parish groups; and beverages from the Calvert association. The staff at St. Ann's set up and decorated the tables in the auditorium. Through a variety of raffles, the Ladies of Charity raised \$485 for St. Ann's. In addition, attendees brought an assortment of new clothing and layette items for the children. A good time was had by all. †



A ROCK ON TUESDAYS AT THE HARKER HEIGHTS THRIFT SHOP

For 11 years without fail, Donna Kowaleski has volunteered at the Ladies of Charity Thrift Shop in Harker Heights, Texas. At age 79, she comes in from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. to sort and price donated clothing and other items. Donna is a member of St. Paul Hasang Church, which sponsors the shop. To her, the volunteer work is a chance to give back.

"We have such good camaraderie among the volunteers, and the money goes back into the community," said Donna. "We have lots of customers, especially this past year, because of the

economy. There are regulars who are like family, and I have fun and look forward to my day there. I like it and the people I work with. Doing this gets me out of the house and into the community. And the thrift shop does a good service for us and the people who use it."

Assistant manager Judy Gilliland says, "Donna is 'our rock' on Tuesdays. She's a godsend and one of the best volunteers ever." †

Excerpted from an article by Kim Steele in the *Killeen Daily Herald*, March 18, 2012

BINGHAMTON, NEW YORK FASHION SHOW



Models relaxing after the show. Seated, Jean Orlovsky and Barbara Caveny. Standing, Barbara Stevesky, Joyce Strilka, Elaine Colangelo, Lanie Cummings, Joan Paccione, Lalonnie Pratt, Maryle Carns and Sally Paniccia.

AIC REPORT

AIC MOVES FORWARD

MARGARET HANSON
AIC Representative



visibility of AIC through collaboration with other Vincentian family groups, continued representation in international organizations as well as sharing best practices is evident in the work and activity of the national and/or continental groups.

This past year there has been a focus on improved coordination and communication, educational assemblies providing formation and training, particularly in the implementation of systemic change, a plethora of fundraising efforts and international representation and advocacy.

A day was devoted during the meeting to planning and confirming arrangements for the 2013 Delegate Assembly which will be held March 13–19, at Assumption University in Bangkok, Thailand. Frequent discussions took place concerning the promotion and encouragement of candidates for leadership positions at every level of the organization. An executive board meeting will precede the assembly. Election of delegates will occur at the meeting and the newly constituted executive board will meet post assembly.

Underlying the work of the AIC Executive Board is the hope that in 2017, the four hundredth anniversary of a gathering of women whose purpose was to perform charitable works for those in need, our numbers will increase and as a result of our openness to youth a network of a quarter of a million volunteers throughout the world will be engaging in innovative actions against poverty, especially the poverty of women. †

The AIC Executive Board met mid-January at Casa Maria Immacolata in Rome, Italy. The meeting was held subsequent to the meeting of leaders of the Vincentian Family groups: the Fathers of the Mission, C.M.; the Daughters and Sisters of Charity; AIC: Ladies of Charity; Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

The AIC Executive Board continues to support and promulgate the 2011–2012 Operational Guidelines voted on at last year's Delegate Assembly in Madrid, Spain, emphasizing that education is a two-way process to identify and value skills and potential, encourage interdependence and promote creativity through strengthening AIC spiritual, ethical and Vincentian training, particularly in communication and visibility techniques.

Each country and each locality will continue to engage in the pursuit of justice and advocacy on behalf of just causes, undergirded by Vincentian values and spirituality. Increasing the

Children in Crisis

Gayle Johnson

*“Live simply so that others
may simply live.”*

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

With the the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Ukraine, a country of 47 million, declared independence and began a transition to a mixed economy. Under the USSR there was low pay but guaranteed employment and accommodation. What followed in 1991 was unemployment, political corruption, widespread alcoholism and extreme poverty made worse by the economic crisis in 2008. Because Ukraine is considered “European” and not a third world country, it receives little international aid. Some families survive on \$2 a day. Due to parents’ poor health, alcoholism and violence, often children are put in overcrowded state orphanages. Many run away and take to the streets.

At St. Vincent de Paul Parish Centre, an international homeless charity, vol-

unteers use a minibus to bring food to five points in the city six nights a week to feed these street children who range in age from seven and older. The children sleep wherever they find shelter—during the summer in a kiosk, the cemetery, or an underpass, during the winter in the sewers or heating duct holes. Some sniff glue to keep up their spirits. Some contract tuberculosis and die. About 60% end up in prison. The de Paul centre supplies the minibus and other services.

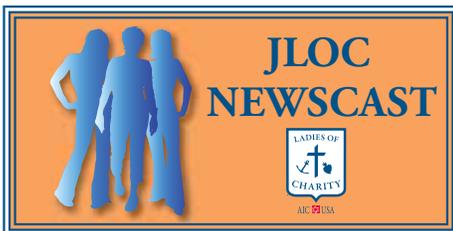
LCUSA is being asked to help these children in crisis by supporting a program that takes some of them off the street, helps those who are in school with homework (many are not in school) and gives them a hot meal and a safe place to play. Many of the surrounding buildings have been condemned but not destroyed. Water must be carried from pipes in other buildings to the liv-



AIC President Laurence de La Brosse (right) and Christine Crump, from AIC Great Britain (left), visit Ukraine to see first-hand the hardship many children endure.

ing facilities. The staff consists of a part-time cook, a religious sister, a part-time teacher, and AIC volunteers, many of whom are students.

If you or your association is willing to help these children, please send your check marked, “Ukraine Project” to the LCUSA National Service Center at 100 N. Jefferson Ave., St. Louis, MO 63103. †



Juniors in the News

St. Margaret of Scotland JLOC

Seat Pleasant, Md.
 Jasmine Stokes, President
 Angel Hart, Chaplain
 Gloria Rose, Moderator

Good news from the Junior Ladies of Charity of the Archdiocese of Washington! Recruitment has been successful. The group is now six years old and the young women are learning how to care for the less served among us.

The members receive credits in their school records for volunteering. The Juniors at St. Margaret of Scotland have received financial support from the Young Senior Citizens organization and the Prince George's County Ladies of Charity. A grant was also received from LCUSA. The financial support enabled the Juniors to provide school supplies for children and toiletries for women at Shepherd Cove's homeless shelter, Thanksgiving food baskets, Valentine's gifts, and most recently Easter gifts for St. Ann's Infant and Maternity Home.

Thank you letters were received from the United Communities Against Poverty (UCAP) and Sister Mary Ann Bader, D.C., director of St. Ann's Infant and Maternity Home. †

Saint Anthony of Padua JLOC

North Beach, Md.
 Bunnie Tate, Moderator

The Junior Ladies of Charity are very busy. Their recent activities include bake sales to donate supplies for the Birthright Program for babies. Some members were presented scholarships of \$100 to \$500 from the St. Anthony's Ladies of Charity association based on their levels of participation in JLOC activities.

Junior Ladies who have graduated from high school return to assist with activities. Former member Karen Macken has been recognized for volunteering with senior citizens in Frostburg. †

St. Mary of the Assumption JLOC,

Lancaster, N.Y., Diocese of Buffalo
 Marian Snyder, Moderator

The Junior group recently searched the parish cemetery and located the gravesites of seven Sisters of St. Francis who were among the first nuns to teach at St. Mary's school in the late 1800s. They cleaned the area and planted flowers and are planning to raise funds for the repair of the tombstones. Eight young ladies were inducted on June 14th. There are now 25 members. †

Junior T-Shirt Contest

Exciting activities are happening with the wonderful Junior Ladies! To show appreciation and recognition, LCUSA is sponsoring a Junior Ladies of Charity tee – shirt design competition. The association with the winning design will be awarded \$100 and its design will be available for all Juniors at the 2012 National Assembly. Juniors start your designs! Email margefiala@sbcglobal.net or lvspringer@hotmail.com if you have not already received information. †



We are bombarded with all sorts of ideas about beauty. We want to hear from LCUSA Juniors. What do you think *true beauty* is and how can one attain true beauty? Email your words of wisdom to margefiala@sbcglobal.net. Responses will be in the next *Servicette* issue. †

What is True Beauty?

Join LCUSA for a Cup of Coffee!

Join LCUSA for a Cup of Coffee!

The Ladies of Charity now have their own blend of coffee courtesy of The Roasterie. For every package sold LCUSA receives a donation of 10% of the purchase value. Simply visit www.TheRoasterie.com and click on Coffee and click again on "Causes." The blends are listed alphabetically. The coffee will also be available for purchase at the upcoming national assembly.



Juniors restoring neglected grave sites. *First row (from left):* Melissa Cassel, Olivia Spencer and Julia Kajdas. *Second row:* Stephanie Nemmer, Anna Heerd, Sydney Zajac, Julia Rozler, Emily Cassel (secretary). *Third row:* Rachel Loecher (president), Jennifer Thill (vice president) and Kelly Chmiel (treasurer).

Membership Reports

ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON

Toni K. Gaines



From left: Patricia Robinson, Rosalind Taylor, Janet Crowe (president), Joyce Williams and Jamila Stone at the OLPH investiture ceremony.

On Sunday, April 29th, in celebrations of “Ladies of Charity Day” at our Lady of Perpetual Help Church (OLPH), Father Thomas Frank, S.S.J., pastor, solemnly vested four ladies into the parish’s Ladies of Charity association. These women have demonstrated their commitment to those in need in the community and parish, particularly through the OLPH Ladies of Charity food pantry, and Feed the Homeless and Christmas projects. President Janet Crowe welcomed the new members. †

CENTRAL ALABAMA

Connie O’Brien



Carol Sauer, Lanita Engates-Khareel and Morgan Hoyt were among the hostesses at the Central Alabama membership night.

“People who know about us and our good work are more likely to talk about us and help us grow.”

On Monday evening, April 2nd, the Ladies of Charity of Central Alabama hosted a membership night. Each current member was asked to bring at least two or more new

women to the gathering at the home of Connie O’Brien. Time was given for socializing among current members, local Daughters of Charity, and potential new members. Sr. Brenda Monahan, D.C., gave a brief history of the Ladies of Charity and their relationship to St. Vincent and St. Louise. Connie O’Brien spoke about the national organization, LCUSA–AIC, and the international organization, AIC. She provided information on other associations around the country, the board structure (and regional breakdown), the upcoming assembly, and our national newsletter, the *Servicette*. Marlyss Giles, local association president, spoke to the group about the “hands on” volunteer work and activities of the Ladies in Birmingham.

Father Paul Oberg, SSJ, pastor of Our Lady of Fatima in Birmingham, attended the gathering. He has worked enthusiastically for the local Ladies as a recruiter. Frank Savage, director of education for the Diocese of Birmingham, also attended the gathering. The organizers found it helpful to invite people who are “networked” in parishes and the diocese, who can advocate and publicize the Ladies of Charity.

Out of the 12 women who came to the membership night, three have officially joined the association by filling out an application and paying dues. The remaining nine have asked to be added to the email list, the vehicle used to communicate to membership. All hope they will officially join by year’s end! †

DIOCESE OF BUFFALO

Kathleen Sieracki

An advertisement for the Ladies of Charity of Buffalo, NY. It features the organization's logo, which includes a cross, an anchor, and a heart. The text reads: "Do you want to make a difference? Come and Serve with the Ladies of Charity". Below this, it provides the address "1122 Broadway, Buffalo NY" and the phone number "716-895-4001". The website "www.locbuffalo.org" is also listed. At the bottom, it says "Ladies of Charity" and "CATHOLIC CHARITIES".

The Ladies of Charity of Buffalo designated June as “Membership Month.” The diocesan newspaper, *The Western New York Catholic*, published a front page story about the association, with information expanding on an ad purchased by the ladies. †

SIGN-UP FOR CAPWIZ

Join the Legislative Network of the Vincentian Family.

Sign up as a Lady of Charity

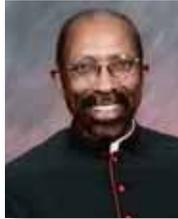
<http://www.capwiz.com/svdpusa/mlm/signup/>

2012 LCUSA NATIONAL ASSEMBLY



Keynote: Father Gregory G. Gay, II, CM, is the superior general of the Congregation of the Mission known as the Vincentian Fathers and Brothers and the Daughters of Charity. He will serve a second term through 2016.

Monsignor Raymond East of the Archdiocese of Washington will speak on “St. Vincent de Paul and the New Evangelization,” uniting Vincentian charism with Pope Benedict’s enthusiasm for 21st century methods of spreading the gospel.



Sister Carol Keehan, DC, will present “St. Vincent de Paul and the Care of the Sick: What Would He Do Today?” Sister Carol will share some of our common heritage of St. Vincent, his writings and his approach to the needs of the vulnerable and sick, and how we can continue to live that Vincentian commitment and zeal for the sick in our day.

Workshop: Breaking the Cycle of Poverty and Homelessness in the Nation’s Capital. Two senior administrators of So Others Might Eat (SOME), will discuss how this agency meets the immediate needs of individuals, empowers them to help themselves and restores hope and dignity one person at a time.

Workshop: Service and Advocacy for Children and Pregnant Parenting Teenagers in Foster Care. Sister Mary Bader, DC,

will describe the multifaceted programs offered at St. Ann’s Infant and Maternity Home to meet the needs of impoverished children and teens living in the Washington, DC, area.

Workshop: Panel Discussion-The Hidden Cost of Freedom: From Torture Survivor to Trafficking Survivor. The nexus of torture and trafficking will be clear as survivors narrate their journey as asylum seekers. The presenters hope that their stories will motivate listeners to join in the search for measures to combat this problem.

Workshop: Resources for Local Systemic Change Meetings. Mary Ann Dantuono and Sister Julie Cutter, DC, and participants will review and practice with resources for local or regional meetings and workshops. Presidents of local associations are especially welcome.

Workshop: The Call of Faith and Love: Being a Spiritual Moderator in LCUSA. Sister Frances Ryan, DC, will explain how to use resources on the LCUSA website for the formation of lay spiritual moderators.

Workshop: Legislative Advocacy: Changing Systems to End Poverty. Led by Sister Mary Ellen Lacy, DC, this workshop will provide basic skills on how to build relationships with lawmakers and effectively collaborate to promote just legislation.

Workshop: Health and Harmony-Restore, Renew, Refresh with Qigong Stretches. Tracey Horner Burde will teach participants five simple yet profound Qigong exercises to help restore harmony to body, mind and spirit. †



Assembly Silent Auction Donations

items, gift cards to national retail stores and tickets to sports events.

If you plan to bring your gift to the assembly please send your descriptive information in advance, as soon as possible. Include your name, address, home/cell phone, e-mail, name of item, approximate size, value and suggested opening bid. You may also mail your gift directly. Descriptions and gifts should both be sent to Judy Fisher, Co-Chair,



4823 Leland Street, Chevy Chase, MD 20815. (gandjfisher@verizon.net)

If you prefer to send a check, please make it payable to LCUSA and send it to Peggy Campbell, Co-Chair, Holy Ghost Ladies of Charity – ADW, 16110 Cedar Lane, Newburg, MD 20664. (Rpredhatlady@aol.com) †

PRESIDENT'S TRAVELS

Cont'd from p. 6

were very much aware of the presence of the Ladies of Charity and their wonderful works.

Traveling home, I spent the night in Emmitsburg at the Daughters of Charity home. Can you imagine spending the night on the grounds where St. Elizabeth lived and worked? It is an amazing feeling, so warm and comforting. That evening I met with the Ladies of Charity and their Spiritual Moderator Sister Ann Adele Kelly, D. C. for dinner. The next morning I visited the Seton Center Thrift Shop across from the shrine. In Villa St. Michael, I met with Providence Hospital's first Spiritual Moderator, Sister Cecilia Rose. I also



Lynchburg Virginia LOC Sacred Heart Parish

So blessed are we as Ladies of Charity to have these Daughters and Sisters as our Spiritual Moderators. I hope each of us counts our blessings every day.

On my way home from my granddaughter's college graduation in April, my husband and I visited with the Sacred

the assistance of their Spiritual Advisor Father Willey. Just like last year, we met at the Carter May Nursing Home where two of their members reside. I enjoyed very much seeing the ladies and listening to their plans as they continue their ministries as Ladies of Charity.

In June I was invited to a commissioning ceremony at St. Cecilia's in Baltimore followed by a brunch. Their president, Joan Scott, welcomed four new members. I had the pleasure of meeting Joan and some of her members in December when I was invited by LOC President Bernadine Douglas to attend Mass and luncheon at Immaculate Conception. Both parishes work together and share one pastor, Father Sylvester Peterka, C.M., who installed the new members during Mass. The liturgy was uplifting and inspiring with Immaculate Conception's choir adding its musical energy to this special celebration.

July afforded me the opportunity to meet with the LOC association located in Lynchburg, Va. There I met with some members in the afternoon and other members in the evening. It was very interesting to see how members serve their local community working in what they term as "circles." There are four circles spread across the city which work independently of each other and come together for major projects. The Lynchburg LOC was established in 1898 and is proud of the presence it has in the community today.

A special thanks to everyone who has invited me to see firsthand the wonderful message of love each association carries for those it serves. I look forward to visiting other associations during my last four months as LCUSA president. †



Charleston's Ladies of Charity, (seated, left to right): Mary Eileen Leonard (president); Elsie DeRain (treasurer); Louise Hill, Althea Noisette. Standing (left to right): Vera Steplight; Lucy Saunders; Bessie Stroble; Marie Daniel, Carolyn Whaur, Mary Aelick

went to see Sister Denise Simms, whose family belonged to my parish of Holy Ghost. Sister Denise is 101, but still asks about the Holy Ghost Ladies of Charity and keeps them in her prayers.

Heart LOC, Charleston, S.C., chartered September 1, 1976. As this was my second visit, I was happy to see that they were all well and actively taking care of the needs of their community with



Beloved Spiritual Moderators

Sr. Mary Ann Brawley, D.C., (left) former spiritual moderator for the Binghamton, N.Y., Ladies of Charity and now Sister Servant for two communities of Daughters of Charity in Buffalo. Sr. Mary Grace Higgins, D.C., (right) is the spiritual moderator of the Buffalo Ladies of Charity.

Wednesday, September 12

PM

3-8 Registration
2-8 Accepting Silent Auction donations
Dinner on your own
6:30- DC Night Tour & Dinner (Optional)

Thursday, September 13

AM

7-7:30 Rosary
7:30-8:45 Continental Breakfast
8-10 Registration
8-10 Accepting Silent Auction donations
9-5 Emmitsburg Tour (includes lunch) (Optional)

PM

3 Past Presidents' Meeting, Hospitality Rm.
4-8 Registration
4-8 Accepting Silent Auction donations
Dinner on your own
5:30-8:30 LCUSA Board Dinner Meeting
7-9 Hospitality Room

Friday, September 14

AM

7-7:30 Rosary
7:30-8:45 Continental Breakfast
Regional Vice Presidents' Meeting
7:30-Silent Auction open
8-9 Registration
9-10:15 Opening ceremonies
Invocation: Fr. Gielow
Presentation of Colors
Pledge of Allegiance
Call to order
Welcome by Lucy Saunders,
LCUSA President
Welcome by co-chairs, Rita and Debbie
Welcome by Charles Short,
Special Assistant to Montgomery
County Executive Isiah Leggett
Roll Call
Report of Credentials
Timekeeper
Presentation of N.A. rules
Introduction of board members, past
presidents, officers
10:15-10:45 Father Gregory Gay, C.M., Keynote Speaker
10:45-11 Q&A
11-11:15 Break
11:15-11:45 Msgr. Raymond East
11:45-12 Q&A

PM

12:15 -1:45 Sit down lunch/Entertainment
2-2:45 Workshops (Choose one)
1. Poverty and Homelessness
2. Service and Advocacy for



Children/Pregnant and Parenting
Teenagers

3. Human Trafficking
4. Systemic Change
5. Lay Moderators
6. Legislative Advocacy
7. Health and Harmony

3-3:45 Repeat workshops
4:15 Mass Fr. Gielow
Collection for Twinning Project Madagascar
Dinner on your own
6 - "Spirit of Washington" Dinner Cruise (Optional)
7-9 Hospitality room

Saturday, September 15

AM

7-7:30 Rosary
7:30-8:45 Continental breakfast
7:30-8:45 Association Presidents' Meeting
8-9 Registration
7:30 Silent Auction open
9-9:30 Prayer Service
Roll Call/Housekeeping issues
Honor Sister Letitia, D.C.
9:30-10:00 Sister Carol Keehan, D.C.
10:00-10:15 Q&A
10:15-10:30 Break
10:30 Silent Auction Closes
10:30-11:45 Regional Meetings
12:00 Lunch on your own
Spiritual Moderators' Lunch

PM

1:15-1:30 AIC Updates
Margaret Hanson & Gayle Johnson
1:30-2:00 Visibility Thru Communications
Fr. John Freund & Elena Miranda
2-3:30 Business meeting
Announce slate of officers
Voting
Grants
Junior LOC
Presentation of 2013 National Assembly
San Jose, California
3:30-4 Orientation of new board members
3:30-4:15 Pickup Silent Auction items
4:30 Walk to church/Transport available if needed
5:00-6:00 Mass at Our Lady of Lourdes, Bethesda
Installation of officers
7-10 Cocktails, Banquet, Entertainment

Sunday, September 16

AM

7:30-9, Breakfast Board Meeting (current and
newly elected members)



“To serve rather than to be served”

Part I: Louise de Marillac Le Gras, Well-Prepared by God

Carol Schumer, D.C.
& Frances Vista, D.C.



Abandoned, rejected, rigid, scrupulous and self-focused, Louise de Marillac Le Gras progressed, via suffering and relationship, to become a woman who felt accepted and loved, was flexible, free and service-oriented. With the help of God’s grace, she was led to develop her God-given talents and became mentor, collaborator, foundress and saint.

Born illegitimate in 1591, Louise was “claimed” by Louis de Marillac who was found to be impotent later in life, so he was not her biological father. As an infant, Louise was sent to a convent-school, due to non-acceptance by Louis’ wife. There at Poissy, she received a quality education in the arts and

Louise suffered for years with this uncertainty, praying for resolution, which she finally received during a deep experience with God.

humanities and was introduced to a deep spiritual life. Louise remained close to her “dad,” so was deeply saddened when he died. She was only 12. As a result, she was moved to the boarding home of a woman who taught young girls domestic work. At about 15, she felt drawn to the cloistered life; she was refused admission. Devastated, Louise turned to her spiritual director who assured: “God has other plans for you.”¹

Louise was at a loss as to the next step. The de Marillacs took charge, convincing her marriage was the best alternative. When she was 22, her uncle arranged for her to marry Antoine Le Gras, an ambitious young man, destined for great accomplishments. They were wed in 1613. Later that same year the couple had their only child, Michel. Around 1621, Antoine contracted a chronic illness and became bedridden. Louise tenderly nursed and cared for him and their son. However, she agonized as to whether being a wife and a mother was her true vocation as she still longed for a life of service to God.

Louise suffered for years with this uncertainty, praying for resolution, which she finally received during a deep

experience with God. In 1623, she wrote, “... my mind was instantly freed of all doubt. I was ... [to] remain with my husband and a time would come when I would ... make vows of poverty, chastity and obedience and I would be in a small community where others would do the same.”² Louise was also told she would be guided to a new spiritual director, Vincent de Paul.

Two years after this experience, Antoine died and left Louise to fulfill her next mission in life. She wholeheartedly committed herself to her own spiritual development. Given her demanding schedule, Louise needed guidance and a tempering of her intensity and drive. This was to come from her relationship with Vincent de Paul. (*To be continued in Part II: Louise, Collaborator with Vincent de Paul.*)

What does Louise invite 21st-century Ladies of Charity to ask ourselves?

The suffering and disappointment of her childhood were growth opportunities, preparation for all God had in store for Louise. The tools she needed for her later ministry were provided.

- † What did God offer me in my early life that prepared me to meet the demands of adulthood, service?
- † How has God provided all I need—as a woman, Christian, a Lady of Charity—today? †

¹ Dirvin, Joseph, *Louise de Marillac*, 1970, page 22

² *Spiritual Writings of Louise de Marillac*, A.2
“Light,” page 1