

# LADIES OF CHARITY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA® SERVICE

*"To serve rather than to be served"*



AIC USA®

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MAY 2016

## Pope Francis Calls for Care for Our Common Home What Can We Do About It?

*Among the poor being treated worst is our planet. We cannot pretend all is fine in the face of the great environmental crisis.*

Pope Francis

At its 2015 national assembly, LCUSA adopted a resolution to support Pope Francis' encyclical on the environment. Members were urged to continue following the concerns through the Catholic Global Climate Movement ([www.CatholicClimateMovement.global](http://www.CatholicClimateMovement.global)). Two articles in this issue follow up on the resolution and help us understand how we can respond. The author of the following is a Lady of Charity in the St. John's University Association who has a doctorate in environmental science. The Advocacy Connections column in this issue, written by Irene Frechette, discusses a Catholic's response to climate change.

### *Laudato Si: An Environmental Reflection*

Colleen Greaney, Ph.D.

"What kind of home do we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up?" With these questions, Pope Francis challenges "every person on the planet" in his encyclical *Laudato Si: On Care for our Common Home*. The Pontiff speaks passionately about the "global environmental dete-

*Continued — see Laudato Si, p. 13*

## 36<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL ASSEMBLY 2016, QUEENS, NY

September 29–October 1, 2016

Dear Ladies,

*Because it is very useful for all holy communities to meet together from time to time in some appropriate place to treat their spiritual advancement and...to treat the matters that concern the good of the poor and the maintenance of said confraternity.*

(St. Vincent de Paul, Rule of the Confraternity of Charity of Châtillon, November 1617)

It is our pleasure and privilege, to join the Ladies of Charity at St. John's University and the Northeast Region to invite you to attend the 2016 Annual National Assembly of the Ladies of Charity USA in Queens, NY "Ladies of Charity: Women of Mercy." Following the teaching of our founder, we gather annually to:

1. provide unity and cooperation among the associations of the Ladies of Charity;
2. animate the Catholic and Vincentian spirit by sharing our rich history, tradition, and prayer;
3. develop leadership, management and governance skills to assure best practices in the associations;
4. encourage the activities of the associations in charity, education and advocacy, individually and in collaboration with the Vincentian family to achieve systemic change;
5. and, advance our understanding of poverty.

You will be experiencing the "Big Apple" and her wonderful people— from the fabulous keynote speakers and workshop presenters, to some very special guests and prayer leaders. Most importantly you will meet "Women of Mercy" from all parts of the USA and the new leadership you will elect to cross the threshold of the future as we begin the celebration of our 400th anniversary!

Your presence is important to the success of the Assembly. Please register early and consider supporting the national assembly with a program ad, underwriting donation, and gift card auction donation.

With gratitude for God's mercy, in the spirit of St. Vincent and St. Louise,

Mary Ann Dantuono, President, LCUSA

Natalie Boone, Local Chair



2016 National Assembly

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New Junior group in Knoxville

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Photo Gallery

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

**Editor-in-Chief** Mary Ann Dantuono  
**Editor** Kathleen Sieracki  
**Layout & Design** Elena Miranda  
**Executive Director** Tama Dutton

Direct all correspondence and inquiries to:  
Servicette, LCUSA Service Center  
850 Main St.  
Kansas City MO 64105  
Email: [office@ladiesofcharity.us](mailto:office@ladiesofcharity.us)

### 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 next issue of the **SERVICETTE**:

**Friday, July 1, 2016**

Articles and photos can be sent by e-mail to: [kathleen.sieracki@gmail.com](mailto:kathleen.sieracki@gmail.com)  
Articles and photos should be sent separately and not within the text document.

**Please contact us for info.**



## Reach Out and Touch Somebody's Hand

**Bishop David A. Zubik**  
*Episcopal Chairman*

Very good friends took me to a Diana Ross concert for my birthday. The concert was everything I hoped it would be and more. For nearly two straight hours, save for a few quick wardrobe changes, she sang all her hits, including "Reach Out and Touch Somebody's Hand."

That song got me to thinking. The next time you are at a restaurant or in a fast-food place, check how many people are sitting together, yet staring at their smartphones. Do the same thing on a bus or even at the ballpark. I was outside the theater after a movie and a group of teenage girls and boys came out together. They all went immediately to their phones to call someone, look up something, check their Facebook, Tweet, whatever. The people they were with seemed to just disappear.

We need a new campaign to "reach out and touch somebody's hand." If we want and hope to bring souls to Christ, we need to reach out in this world where we have allowed ourselves to become so isolated.

Remember the first time most of us saw Pope Francis? He was on the papal balcony, just having been elected the successor of Saint Peter. The square below him was packed with thousands upon thousands of people waving and cheering. He asked them for their blessing. Then he lowered his head, and bowed from the waist to silently receive that blessing—from them, and from the whole world. I wonder how many were brought to Christ in that humble papal gesture. I wonder how many had their faith deepened by that simple act.

Pope Francis is a master of the small moments of evangelization. His pil-



Havana, Cuba - September 20, 2015:  
Pope Francis greets pilgrims in Havana's Revolutionary Square before Mass. The Pontiff visited Cuba from Sept. 19–22.  
© L'Osservatore Romano

grimage to Cuba and America was filled with such little things, such small acts that took perhaps only a few seconds but in their own way moved mountains, including blessing the handicapped child, touching the cheek of a soul reaching out to him, asking for the kind thoughts of the non-believers who do not pray and sometimes just smiling broadly.

His patron, Saint Francis of Assisi, said it famously: "Preach the Gospel at all times, and when necessary use words," and: "It is no use walking anywhere to preach unless our walking is our preaching."

The Holy Father is a daily example of living evangelization. He is a reminder to each of us that we never know when or where a small gesture on our part—a kindness, a soft word, a smile—can make all the difference. Evangelization begins in the small moments of reaching out. That means in particular how we reach out to those who are suffering, to those in need of mercy, to those looking for a sense of forgiveness in their own lives when things have gone wrong.

Let's try together not to leave anyone behind, not to leave anyone hurting. Let's try through the simple, small moments of our lives to "reach out and touch somebody's hand" with the love and mercy of Jesus.



## President's Message

**Mary Ann Dantuono**

*LCUSA President*

*True mercy, the mercy God gives to us and teaches us, demands justice, it demands that the poor find the way to be poor no longer.*

Pope Francis, 9/10/13

I have not been able to get this quote out of my head. It appeared in the prayer for LOC Associations that Sr. Carol Schumer, DC, prepared for us in January to celebrate the year of mercy. Pope Francis is calling us to see with new eyes—to see how the problems of poverty must be solved, not how we can alleviate the symptoms of poverty. What must we do to create conditions so that the poor can find their way out of poverty? On two different occasions recently, Ladies told me stories of women trapped in poverty. Poverty strangles and tangles up their lives, leaves no exits, and destroys hope. Each story described a spiral that moved into deeper poverty, not out of poverty. I thought of the poverty simulation we experienced at the last assembly. Many of us were frustrated, had increased blood pressure and wanted

to give up in the first 30 minutes. The stories recently told to me involved lifetimes of frustration, deprivation and lack of choices. Poverty has few exits.

True mercy requires us to openly acknowledge and share each gift that God has given to us, like the servant whose debt is forgiven (Matt 18:21). God's mercy is calling us to use our gifts to change the conditions that trap the poor in poverty and to empower them to "find the way to be poor no longer." It is good to make a pot of soup and share it with the poor. But Pope Francis



*Ladies of Charity, Women of Mercy*

is challenging us to make sure that the poor have pots, recipes, good fresh ingredients, not infected with pollutants, and schools that teach our neighbors to read and to calculate, and safe neighborhoods and homes where poor families can eat soup with their family and friends.

This vision describes the systemic

change methodology that our Vincentian family is working to incorporate in all our projects. This methodology is challenging. It is just. It is not an easy fix. It requires openness, strength and a willingness to view the status quo from the vantage point of people who are poor. It demands equitable distribution of God's resources.

As we celebrate the risen Christ, let us look with new vision at our projects and see how they can be more transformative. As we celebrate the risen Christ, let us look with new vision at our projects and see how they can be more rooted in the demands of justice. As we celebrate the risen Christ, let us continue to work together with people in poverty to find the ways to exit poverty, to protect our common home, and to share God's mercy that demands justice.

In this extraordinary Jubilee year of mercy, please come September 29-October 1, to the 2016 National Assembly in Queens, N.Y. The Ladies of Charity will join with the whole Church to give thanks for God's mercy and to strengthen the call we share to witness to God's mercy. Through prayer, networking and education, we will explore the theme of "true mercy" and continue to strengthen our community of Women of Mercy. Please review the materials in this issue and go to our website for easy online registration and payment. I look forward to meeting you.

## AIC MOMENTS

Gayle Johnson



The executive board of AIC met from January 18–20 in Châtillon, France, to plan for the 400th anniversary of the founding by St. Vincent de Paul of the Confraternity of Charities (AIC) in 1617. AIC has proclaimed a Jubilee Year to begin on December 8, 2016 and end on December 10, 2017. The international assembly will be held March 12–15, 2017 in Châtillon. Our slogan is "400 years with Saint Vincent: We build together to bring hope to life." When the 400th logo is used with the theme it is shortened to "With Saint Vincent we build together to give hope to life."

Focus during the Jubilee Year is on communication to make ourselves known and to spread our charism. Two elements are already in progress to this end. Short video moments of testimony to the work of the Ladies by their beneficiaries are being collected by associations worldwide. They may be taken on your cell phone, tablet or camera and sent to our national office. We would like to receive them as soon as possible.

The second element is piloting of the diploma program by some English speaking countries. In the United States

*Continued — see p. 12, AIC Moments*



# ADVOCACY CONNECTIONS

## A Catholic's Response to Climate Change

Irene Frechette (SVDP & LCUSA)

**L**et's start at the beginning, and for most of us — that is the Baltimore Catechism! One of the very first things that we learned as children was:

**Question:** Who made the world?

**Answer:** God made the world.

**Question:** Who is God?

**Answer:** God is the Creator of heaven and earth and of all things.

If we start at the beginning and God made heaven and earth and all things, then it follows that heaven and earth and all things are sacred, because God made them.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) paper on why the Catholic Church cares about global climate change states that “At its core, global climate change is not about economic theory or political platforms, nor about partisan advantage or interest group pressures. It is about the future of God’s creation and the one human family. It is about protecting both the human environment and the natural environment.”

There are three themes within Catholic Social Teaching that apply:

**Care for God's Creation** We are called to protect people and the planet, living our faith in relationship with all of God's

### Vincentian Family Social Justice Representatives' Statement In Support of Our Muslim Brothers and Sisters

**T**he Vincentian Family Social Justice Representatives, including Ladies of Charity USA, embrace the call of Pope Francis in this Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy:

There is an aspect of mercy that goes beyond the confines of the Church....Among the privileged names that Islam attributes to the Creator are “Merciful and Kind.” This invocation is often on the lips of faithful Muslims who feel themselves accompanied and sustained by mercy in their daily weakness. They too believe that no one can place a limit on divine mercy because its doors are always open.

I trust that this Jubilee year celebrating the mercy of God will foster an encounter with these religions and with other noble religious traditions; may it open us to even more fervent dialogue so that we might know and understand one another better; may it eliminate every form of closed-mindedness and disrespect; and drive out every form of violence and discrimination.<sup>1</sup>

Likewise, we embrace Pope Francis’ conviction from an earlier document:

Faced with disconcerting episodes of violent fundamentalism, our respect for true followers of Islam should lead us to avoid hateful generalizations, for authentic Islam and the proper reading of the Quran are opposed to every form of violence.<sup>2</sup>

The Vincentian Family Social Justice Representatives commit to publicize this Statement within our branches and with all groups and individuals with whom we interact.

<sup>1</sup> The Face of Mercy, the Bull of Indiction of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, April 11, 2005, 23.

<sup>2</sup> The Joy of the Gospel, Apostolic Exhortation, November 2013, 253.

creation. This environmental challenge has fundamental moral and ethical dimensions that cannot be ignored.

**Rights and Responsibilities** Human dignity can be protected and a healthy community can be achieved only if human rights are protected and responsibilities are met. Therefore, every person has a fundamental right to life and a right to those things required for human decency (like clean air and water).

**Option for the Poor and Vulnerable** A basic moral test is how our most vulnerable members are faring. The poor and vulnerable across the globe are most affected by global warming because they do not have the means to combat it.

**Global warming is a MORAL issue; we need to take action to mitigate its effects!**

At a recent conference in Providence, R.I., Stephen Colecchi, Director of the USCCB Office for International Justice and Peace, said “The Holy Father is asking us to live more simply, but also more fully. People understand that our current rates of consumption are not sustainable. Changes are necessary for us to live in harmony with nature in ways that do not harm nature.”

I recently purchased “Creation at the Crossroads a Small-Group Resource on Pope Francis’ Laudato Si’ (On care for our Common Home)” by Edward J. Ciuba for Renew International ([www.renewintl.org](http://www.renewintl.org)).

The book is written for small parish or organizational groups using a method of social inquiry known as “See, Judge, Act.” The “See” step helps the group focus on the reality of the situation (in this case climate change and global warming). The “Judge” step may impel members to initiate research that will help them more clearly understand their faith and its application to climate change and global warming. The “Act” step can be a significant action representing the united commitment of the group or its local community.

Some suggestions from “Creation at the Crossroads”: Session 1: Our relationship with God, with each other and with the earth:

- ▶ Our diets and the amount of meat that we eat creates the greatest negative impact on God’s creation because meat production uses such enormous amounts of water and energy. How can we adjust our diets to consume less meat?
- ▶ Spend time out of doors. What changes in biodiversity are happening in your area? What can you do to protect the habitats of the local wildlife species?
- ▶ Survey a local public area that is littered and uncared for. Create a plan to improve and maintain this area.
- ▶ Research the impact of garden and lawn pesticides on human and animals.

Take the St. Francis Pledge – **I pledge to pray, act and advocate to solve climate change.** (Catholic Climate Covenant)

# LCUSA Spirituality Committee at Your Service

*"Let us pray to the divine goodness for one another that His mercy may pour out on us His blessings of grace and light so that we may glorify Him eternally."*

St. Louise de Marillac

**G**oal One of the LCUSA Strategic Plan is to develop a process that will deepen Vincentian spirituality for members. Vincentian spirituality based on incarnational theology underlies and motivates every action of a Lady of Charity. Incarnational theology means that we experience God in an encounter with the poor, and that we serve and love God in the service of the poor.

According to reports from local associations, 48 percent of them are lacking a spiritual moderator. Aiming to address this shortage, the Spirituality Committee is developing Vincentian Spiritual Moderator formation standards and a formation program to encourage standardization across the United States. The LCUSA Spirituality Handbook is under revision to assist

local organizations. In addition to the spiritual reflections which appear regularly on the website, and special series for Advent and Lent, the Committee hopes to make these resources easily accessible in as many ways as possible.

Peggy Keene, Mid-Atlantic director, chairs the committee for LCUSA.



Mary Nell Williams, vice president of the North Central Region and Karen Radu, also a Mid-Atlantic director, are members on the committee. Sr. Claire Debes, DC, will be replacing Sr. Frances Ryan on both the national board and

the Spirituality Committee. Sr. Claire serves in Vincentian Family Ministry for the Province of St. Louise. She is the author of most of the reflections in Spirituality Handbook, and previously served on the board in 2005-2007. Sr. Paule Freeburg, DC, Province of the West, another previous national moderator, is also joining the committee, along with Sr. Elyse Staab, DC, who also serves in Vincentian Family Ministry for the Province of St. Louise and Sr. Mary Victor Powers, SC, a Sister of Charity of Seton Hill, Greensburg, Pa. Sr. Mary Victor is also the Spiritual Moderator for the Ladies of Charity in the Diocese of Pittsburgh.

Sr. Fran Ryan, DC, who has been a Vincentian Spiritual Moderator for the LCUSA Board since 2007, has been working with the Spirituality Committee. She is retiring, and LCUSA wishes to thank her for her dedication and service and hopes she has many healthy and happy years to come.

## Feast of St. Louise

**T**he feast day of St. Louise de Marillac has been moved from March 15 to May 9.

Some time ago Vatican officials asked for a review of the Vincentian Liturgical Calendar. St. Louise's feast has traditionally been March 15, the date of her death. This date usually falls during Lent and liturgical solemnities are not normally celebrated during that season. Fr. Gregory Gay, Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission, and Sr. Kathleen Appler, Superioress General of the Daughters of Charity, chose May 9, the anniversary of St. Louise's beatification, since her canonization date also falls in Lent. The change has been approved.

The celebration of St. Louise's feast remains a solemnity and, effective immediately, will be celebrated each year on May 9. The Vincentian Family has also requested that her feast be inserted into the Church's universal calendar. The request is still pending.



## Servicette Now Available in E-Edition

**E**ffective immediately, you may request to have the Servicette delivered to your e-mail box rather than receiving the paper edition. This will eliminate the long delays in home delivery encountered in certain parts of the country. This option will also simplify matters for readers who have different addresses during the winter. Contact the National Service Center by phone (816-260-3853) or email ([office@ladiesofcharity.us](mailto:office@ladiesofcharity.us)) to choose this option.

The Servicette is free to all Ladies of Charity. For others who want to continue receiving the printed version, \$5.00 to renew your annual subscription is now due. Send your payment to the National Service Center, 850 Main St., Kansas City, MO 64105.





LADIES OF CHARITY USA, 2016 NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, MARRIOTT COURTYARD, LAGUARDIA, QUEENS, NY  
SEPTEMBER 29 TO OCTOBER 1, 2016

## Program Highlights

### Ladies of Charity: Women of Mercy

As Vincentian women we will explore in this Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy, the gift of God's mercy and our mission of mercy. To love is to show mercy and it is the primary experience we have of God. The corporal and spiritual works of mercy highlight actions that bring God's reign to the world.

## Keynote Speakers

### First the Heart: Praying with the Spiritual Works of Mercy (Friday, September 30 morning)

A Vincentian heart honors the vulnerable places of life, our own and others, where we are sure to meet the God of infinite mercy. A Vincentian heart knows that prayer and service become one movement when our eyes are fixed on Jesus Christ. Through image and word, quiet and sharing, with Saints Elizabeth Ann Seton and Louise de Marillac as our mentors, this presentation invites us to tenderize our hearts and grow in giving and receiving mercy.

**Sr. Regina Bechtle, SC** is a theologian, spiritual and retreat director, educator and poet. A Sister of Charity of New York, she currently develops resources to foster awareness of the Vincentian spirit of charity. With Sister Judith Metz, Sister Regina co-edited a 4-volume collection of St. Elizabeth Seton's writings. She holds a Ph.D. in theology from Fordham and a certificate from the Vincentian Formation Program for Spiritual Directors.



### Solidarity Embraces Justice and Mercy (Saturday, October 1, afternoon)

A true community of solidarity is one which embraces mercy and justice. As Pope Francis urges "True mercy, the mercy that God gives us and teaches us, demands justice. It demands that the poor find the way to be poor no longer."

**Meghan Clark, Ph.D.** is an assistant professor of moral theology at St. John's University. She also serves as a faculty expert for the Holy See's Mission to the United Nations. In addition, she is a frequent contributor to America Magazine and on the Board of Directors of America Press, Inc. Dr. Clark serves on the faculty advisory board for Catholic Relief Services "CRS University" Global Solidarity Network. She is author of *The Vision of Catholic Social Thought: the Virtue of Solidarity and the Praxis of Human Rights* (2014) that received first prize in CST from the Catholic Press Association in 2015. A Fulbright scholar, Dr. Clark recently returned from teaching in Kenya, Africa.



## Friday, September 30

Opening Mass: A.M.  
Presider: Most Reverend David A. Zubik, DD (invited), Episcopal Liaison, Ladies of Charity, USA

Homilist: Rev. Richard Gielow, CM, Vincentian Spiritual Advisor

New Initiatives, Networking & Buzz Sessions

Erin Von Uffel: Sr. Marie de Mandat-Grancey, DC and the House of Mary in Ephesus, Turkey

Regional Meetings

## Saturday, October 1

Prayer for Mercy: Rev. Michael Whalen, CM with LOC at SJU

Benchmarks and Best Practices Panel

Dr. Joan Ball: Documentary Update: "Acting with a Vincentian Heart"

Business Meeting, Elections

Closing Mass & Installation of Officers: St. Thomas More Church, St. John's University Campus

Tour of the Church: Rev. Patrick Griffin, CM



Homilist: Most Rev. David M. O'Connell, CM



# Mercy Workshops

Friday, September 30, 2016, afternoon. Each participant will attend two!

## 1) CARE FOR THE SICK: THE NEXUS OF JUST WAGES AND QUALITY CARE

**Michael Elsas**, President and CEO of Cooperative Home Care Associates (CHCA), a licensed home health care agency located in the South Bronx. With over 1900 paraprofessional workers and an administrative staff of nearly 100, CHCA has been nationally recognized for its unique worker-centered philosophy, which links quality jobs to quality home care services. Mr. Elsas has nearly 40 years of experience in the home care industry. His professional affiliations include: trustee of the 1199 SEIU Home Health Aide Benefit Fund, Catholic Charities and the Medical Society of NY.



## 2) BURY THE DEAD: UNDERSTANDING END OF LIFE CARE ISSUES AND THE ROLE OF HOSPICE



**Kathy Lavigne, RN** is a graduate of St. Vincent's Hospital School of Nursing and has been with The Community Hospice for over 25 years. She is a Patient Care Supervisor for Central intake and responsible for admissions to home care serving eight counties in Upstate New York. Kathy is a Lady of Charity of Albany.

**Pat Spreitzer** is a registered nurse with over 35 years of nursing experience. Pat presently serves as Provider Relations Specialist / Community Nurse Liaison at The Community Hospice. She focuses on providing both the healthcare provider community and community members with accurate and complete information about Hospice philosophy of care and program services. Pat is also a Faith Community Nurse and works closely with the St. Peter's Health Partners Faith Community Program.



## 3) SHELTER THE HOMELESS: WHAT WILL IT TAKE TO END HOMELESSNESS?



**Rosanne Haggerty**, President and CEO of Community Solutions, an organization that assists communities throughout the US in solving the complex problems facing their most vulnerable residents by leading large-scale change initiatives. She is an internationally recognized leader in developing innovative strategies to end homelessness and strengthen communities. Rosanne is part of the Institute of Global Homelessness, a DePaul International and DePaul University initiative. She is a MacArthur Foundation Fellow, an Ashoka Senior Fellow and a Hunt Alternative Fund Prime Mover. She was awarded the Jane Jacobs medal for new ideas and activism from the Rockefeller Foundation.

## 4) VISIT THE IMPRISONED: THE FACE OF GOD'S MERCY BEHIND BARS

Sr. Tesa Fitzgerald, CSJ, the Founder and Executive Director of Hour Children®, offers a welcoming home and support services to formerly incarcerated mothers and their children upon reentry. Prior to that, she was responsible for NYS curriculum oversight for Catholic elementary schools for the Diocese of Brooklyn, and was both a school Principal and teacher at various Catholic elementary schools. In addition to being an educator, she is a Certified Foster Care Trainer. Sister Tesa has been named a CNN Hero (2012), a White House Champion of Change (2013), and is the 2014 winner of the Opus Prize.



# Ladies of Charity 2016 National Assembly

## Schedule of Optional Tours

New York City attracted 60 million visitors in 2015. Ladies of Charity national assembly attendees are invited to experience the BIG APPLE with a selection of specially created tours and an evening event designed exclusively for them. Tours in the boroughs of Manhattan and Queens are offered on Thursday, Friday and Sunday of the conference.

Cititrekk, Inc., is booking all tours. Payment will be made to them. For a full description of the tours, visit the LCUSA website (<http://aic.ladiesofcharity.us>). Use the Assembly 2016 tab. For more information, contact Cititrekk at 855-TOUR-NYC (855-868-7692) or email [info@cititrekk.com](mailto:info@cititrekk.com). The registration form for tours may be found on the LCUSA website. Registration ends August 1. Full refunds for tour cancellation will be made with two weeks' prior notice. All tours leave from the Marriott Courtyard LaGuardia.

### Thursday, Sept. 29

#### Manhattan Tours

**TM-1** The 9/11 Memorial Park and Museum...the Financial District...Shrine of St. Elizabeth Ann Bayley Seton

10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Minimum of 20 people, \$130 per person, includes transportation, tour guide and admission fee. Lunch cost is not included.

**TM-2** Radio City Music Hall Backstage tour...Art and Architecture of Rockefeller Center...St. Patrick's Cathedral and Fifth Avenue Stroll

10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Minimum of 20 people, \$130 per person, includes transportation, tour guide and admission fee. Lunch cost is not included.

#### Queens Tours

**TQ-1** Long Island City and Astoria... Socrates Sculpture Garden...Noguchi Museum...Museum of the Moving Image  
10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Minimum of 20 people, \$130 per person, includes transportation, tour guide and admission fees. Lunch cost is not included.

**TQ-2** Queens-The Ultimate Melting Pot...Jackson Heights food tastings...Flushing (Little Asia)...Queens Museum...Flushing Meadow Park

10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Minimum of 20 people, \$125 per person, includes transportation, tour guide, admission fee and five international food tastings in Jackson Heights.



### Friday, Sept. 30

#### A Night on Broadway

4:30 p.m.-? Minimum of 20 people, \$220 per person, includes transportation, tour guide, buffet dinner and theater ticket in mid-mezzanine for BEAUTIFUL, the hit musical featuring the life and music of Carole King.

### Sunday, October 2

#### Manhattan Tour

**SM-4:** Historic Chelsea... Meat Packing District... Walk along the High Line... Chelsea Markets

11:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Minimum of 10 people. \$90 per person includes transportation and tour guide. Lunch cost is not included.





# Introducing the 2016 National Assembly Co-Chairs

Natalie Boone and Marge Cashin are co-chairs of the 2016 LCUSA National Assembly. They are both founding members and former presidents of the Ladies of Charity at Saint John's University (SJU) in Queens, N.Y. St. John's is one of three Vincentian universities in the United States. (The others are Niagara University near Lewiston in western New York State, and De Paul University in Chicago.)

A native of Pittsburgh, Natalie has lived on Long Island for 29 years. She was trained as a medical technologist specializing in microbiology, and worked in infectious disease control at the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York City. In recent years she has provided administrative support as a volunteer at the Vincentian Center for Church and Society at St. John's.

Prior to his retirement, Natalie's husband was a member of the faculty at SJU. He frequently taught the summer semester



Natalie (left) and Marge at the 2015 LCUSA Assembly in New Orleans.

at St. John's Rome, Italy campus and he and Natalie lived there in faculty housing. She claims her grasp of Italian is only good enough to understand menus.

Marge Cashin worked in the administration at SJU for 28 years, ending her career as Assistant to the Vice President for Community Relations. She has been retired for 18 months and is very happy with the opportunity to spend more time with her eight grandchildren who all live within 30 minutes of her home.

While Natalie says her command of the Italian language is minimal, Marge is busy teaching herself Spanish. She travels often to the Dominican Republic ("the D. R.") and is building a home there. Marge hopes to become involved in service work there also. She is looking forward to welcoming assembly visitors to "beautiful Queens which has a lot to offer."

## Help Support the National Assembly

LCUSA invites representatives of all local associations to attend the 2016 National Assembly in Queens, N.Y., Sept. 29–Oct. 1. In order to keep the registration fee low enough to enable more to attend, LCUSA invites businesses, associations, members and friends to contribute through underwriting and program ads.

There are three levels of underwriting contributions:

Faith Level	\$2,500+
Hope Level	\$1000-\$2499
Charity Level	\$500-\$999

All contributions are tax deductible. Checks should be written to LCUSA/Underwriting and sent to the National Service Center. Underwriters may also request a complimentary full page ad in the program book. Donors will receive special acknowledgement in the program unless they choose to be anonymous. Please make all contributions by May 15.

The program will also include full-page; half-page; quarter-page; and up to two line ads. The prices, respectively, are \$200; \$125; \$75; and \$50. Donors may request assistance in creating their ad. Checks should be written to LCUSA/Program Ads and must be received at the National Service Center by July 1.

Full details, ad specifications and underwriting and ad forms are available on the LCUSA website ([aic.ladiesofcharity.us](http://aic.ladiesofcharity.us)) under the Assembly 2016 tab.

A silent auction has become a tradition at national assemblies, serving as both a fundraiser and as entertainment. Due to limited storage and other logistical challenges, this year's silent auction will consist of gift cards only. Associations and members are asked to purchase gift cards for national stores and brands and mail them by August 1. A transmittal form is posted on the website.

Further details about these opportunities will also be disseminated to all associations.

## Assembly Resources on LCUSA Website

<http://aic.ladiesofcharity.us>

Choose the Assembly 2016 Tab

- ▶ Assembly Registration form
- ▶ Complete description of optional tours
- ▶ Tour registration form
- ▶ Underwriter form
- ▶ Program ad form and size specifications
- ▶ Hotel and transportation information, and more



## St. Mary of the Assumption Church, Lancaster, N.Y.

### *Reflections*

Some Junior Ladies of Charity reflected recently on what their membership means to them. Seventh grader Nicole Norton is glad she joined “because of the great gratification it gives me to bring joy and happiness into people’s lives. Some people are less fortunate than I am so I like to do everything I can to help. It’s my own way of making a change to our world. My favorite service was at the Response to Love Center. My friends and I got to work in the kitchen serving food to the homeless people and just seeing the smiles

**Left and right:** Juniors Ladies talking with nursing home residents and providing hands-on service.

on their faces made our day.”

Lillian Mikula, also a seventh grader, has “learned to be a member of society and a good neighbor.” She says her favorite project “was when we went to St. Elizabeth’s Nursing Home and put on a spa day for the residents. There were three different stations for each group of girls who worked on nails, hand/ facial massages, makeup and hair. I loved seeing the smiles on the residents’ faces and it made me feel warm inside.”

Eleventh grader Erin Weber wrote “At the end of the day when we are successful in our work and have helped as many people as we can, all of us being different ages and kinds of girls, it makes me happy to see the good that we do.” Mary Jo D’Amore, mother of Anna, a sixth grader, offered this insight: “News programs tend to minimize the humanity of all people and I’m hoping by our projects with JLOC



we can become and remain empathetic.”

The girls also recognize the spiritual value of JLOC. Nicole wrote, “Being a part of JLOC has made me really appreciate the gifts God has given me.” Lillian praises their moderator: “Mrs. Snyder our

leader ...teaches me to help our community and how to love one another as followers of Christ.” According to Erin, “being in Junior Ladies makes me proud that I can work to help others, with God by our side, helping his people who are less fortunate than us.”



## Academy of the Holy Names, Albany, NY

### Kara Leyden, president

The members of Junior Ladies of Charity (JLOC) at the Academy of the Holy Names have completed and are working on several service projects for the 2015-2016 school year. In the fall, we held a coat drive to benefit Mary’s Corner in downtown Albany. We soon after dedicated our efforts to a Yankee Candle Fundraiser in which we raised enough funds to make a \$2,500 donation to Free the Children. This money will be used to pro-

vide water for life for an entire class, one year of healthy lunches for an entire class, and primary education for 20 children in the developing world. We have also held ice cream sundae sales and are selling teal bracelets to collect funds to donate to ovarian cancer research. This project is in honor of our beloved moderator, Judy Wesley, who passed away this past summer from ovarian cancer. In December, we inducted 24 new members into our club, including the first ever Muslim student to be a part of Junior Ladies of Charity. We held a Ben & Jerry’s ice cream sale on





campus in March, to raise awareness about Fair Trade products. Our proceeds will go towards other issues we are focusing on this year, namely girls' education and human trafficking. We are also working on an initiative for a

school-wide Mental Health Awareness day. In May, we collaborate with the school nurse to host a blood drive at Holy Names. We end our school year by selling lightly used books to benefit the Leukemia/Lymphoma Society.



Left: Gabrielle Unbehaun (L) and Samantha Dinwiddie are the moderators of the new JLOC group in Knoxville, Tenn.

## Knoxville

Gabrielle Unbehaun & Samantha Dinwiddie

**L**adies of Charity Knoxville is excited to announce the launch of a Junior Ladies of Charity chapter. Gabrielle Unbehaun and Samantha Dinwiddie will be co-moderators, with Kristie Hopwood as their spiritual moderator.

### Meet the Moderators!

Gabrielle Unbehaun is the daughter of Susan Unbehaun, the executive director of Ladies of Charity Knoxville. She is currently pursuing her Master of Business Administration at the University of Alabama. Gabrielle has previously served as the student director of other volunteer organizations during her undergraduate career, and is looking forward to sharing these experiences with the young people of the new chapter. She started volunteering with Ladies of Charity with her mother and has continued to serve during her breaks from school. She quickly became

passionate about the work Ladies of Charity has been doing and wants to share that passion with others.

Samantha Dinwiddie first became affiliated with Ladies of Charity through her mother, Sharon Dinwiddie, who is the chairperson of the thrift store. She began volunteering in the Emergency Assistance Program, and now is an employee. Volunteer work has been an integral part of her life since a very young age, and she has a lot of experience working with youth. Samantha is looking forward to renewing the vitality of the organization through the addition of this new association of JLOC.

Kristie Hopwood is a member of Ladies of Charity. Her family has been very active in the local Ladies of Charity chapter, with her mother serving as the chairman of the clothing department. The Co-President of the Knoxville LOC, Lisa Morris, recommended her as a spiritual moderator due to her vast previous experience working with youth and her passion for the organization and its values. She looks forward to guiding Gabrielle and Samantha spiritually as they undertake this project.

These women have become very passionate about the work that Ladies of Charity does and want to incorporate the energy of the area's youth into this service. Additionally, they hope to help these young adults grow spiritually and professionally while developing a supportive network of peers. They hope that by

engaging these young people now, they will continue to have the Vincentian spirit of Ladies of Charity for the rest of their lives.

Recruitment began in March with local schools, parishes, and youth groups. The Juniors of Knoxville appreciate your prayers and support at this time!



Thermal underwear purchased by the JLOC of St. Louise de Marillac Parish, Pittsburgh.

brings items for the homeless to a set location. Recently she told Ms. Diane of St. Louise de Marillac Church that her supply of various sizes of men's thermal underwear was desperately low. The Juniors had recently asked Ms. Diane if there was a way to use their grant to help homeless people. She contacted a wholesaler but his supply was depleted. Ms. Diane then went to a department store where she found the thermal underwear on clearance. She was able to purchase 17 pairs of long underwear with the grant.

To augment this giving, the JLOC baked cookies to let the homeless men know that someone is thinking of them and offering prayers. The young ladies wanted to make a difference in someone's life, and they succeeded. They thank everyone, especially Ms. Nancy and Ms. Diane. Yes, the Holy Spirit guides this group in so many ways.

## Pittsburgh

Mary Diederich

**H**ow did the Holy Spirit guide the JLOC of St. Louise de Marillac Church in Pittsburgh, Pa., to spend the \$50 grant they had received from LCUSA? Ms. Nancy of Aspinwall's Ministry is a grassroots program in the Pittsburgh area. Every Monday at 10 p.m., Ms. Nancy



### Dates to Remember

- **May 24, 2015–May 15, 2016**  
(Pentecost to Pentecost) Year of Vincentian Collaboration
- **September 29–October 1, 2016**  
LCUSA National Assembly Queens, N.Y.



# Joining the LCUSA Board

Sister Claire Debes, D.C.

I am a Daughter of Charity of the Province of St. Louise residing in Chicago. My ministry is collaboration with Vincentian Family groups. Earlier ministries were in the education field serving both as middle school teacher and then as principal in schools located in Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia. I was in provincial leadership from 1989 through 1998 for the Province of Emmitsburg, with primary responsibilities in formation and then served as the Vincentian Family Ministry coordinator for eight years before returning to provincial leadership in Emmitsburg for four years. At the time of the unification of four of the five Daughters of Charity provinces into the Province of St. Louise, I returned to ministry with the Vincentian Family.



I was delighted to be asked to return to the LCUSA Board as I have always been inspired by the wonderful ministry of the Ladies of Charity throughout the United States. My background in education and formation has served me well in working not only with you but with other Vincentian Family lay groups. I have always been delighted to share my experience and personal insights with others. I deeply love and appreciate our Vincentian spirituality and see it as such a wonderful gift to our Church. I am delighted to assist LCUSA in whatever ways I can in the future.

## AIC Moments

*Continued from page 3*

the group consists of Mary Ann Dantuono, Suzanne Johnson, Tama Dutton, Gayle Johnson, Donna Montague and Albe McGurk. The diploma program is an on-line training program consisting of eight individual modules, disseminated once a month. The modules cover such topics as our mission and vision, our history and purpose, a project which applies the concepts, fiscal responsibility, transparency, fundraising and other related topics.

In the United States our national celebration will be September 7–10, 2017 in Kansas City, Mo. Further plans for our national and international celebrations will be published on-line and in the Presidents Postings.

# 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.

† MEMORIALS †	
<i>In Memory of</i>	<i>Bequeathed by</i>
Don Abell	Linda Avery Michael M. Tanner, D.D.S., Inc.
Sharon Butler	Jack & Kathy Kavanaugh
Anna Colonna Carroll	Employees of the town of Berne, N.Y.
Janice Choinski	Kathleen Sieracki
Rose Diensberg	Kathleen Sieracki
Sr. Mary Elise Heick	Peg Byrnes
Jim Hollinger	Theresa Ward
James J. Houlihan	Elaine Colangelo & Nick Buccasio
Joan Jackson	Mary Ann Dantuono Kathleen Sieracki Theresa Ward
Melody Kazmierczak	Kathleen Sieracki Betty Wasielewski
Martin J. Kennedy	Kathleen Sieracki
Daniel P. Leslie	Kathleen Sieracki, Judy Mulvihill & Marian Snyder
Edna "Roby" Robson	Karl & Dorothy Faidley Neal & Linda Jansonius Trinity United Methodist Serendipity Sunday School Class
James F. Roehm	Elaine Colangelo & Nick Buccasio Sally Panaccia
Norbert Schumer	Kathleen Sieracki
Helen & Sr. Mary Ann Schutz	Kathleen Sieracki
Donald "Gary" Stark	Theresa Ward

## Extraordinary Year of Mercy

Pope Francis has declared an Extraordinary Jubilee, a Holy Year of Mercy. It began on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, Dec. 8, 2015 and will end on the Feast of Christ the King, Nov. 20, 2016. In his opening announcement, the Pope prayed that the Church will “find in the Jubilee the joy of rediscovering and rendering fruitful God’s mercy, with which we are all called to give comfort to every man and every woman of our time.”

Special emphasis is being given to the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy, activities at the heart of Ladies of Charity ministries. Food collections and

pantries are feeding the hungry and giving drink to the thirsty. Thrift stores are clothing the naked. Emergency assistance for rent and utilities shelters the homeless. When LCUSA resolved to focus on the issue of caregiving, it was implementing the works of visiting the sick and imprisoned (“imprisoned” by illness and dependency). Attendance at funerals and donations in memory of the deceased are answering the exhortation to bury the dead.

In this issue and on the LCUSA website you will find articles, stories and



photos of the many and varied ways Ladies and Junior Ladies are acting with mercy and also seeking justice. The Vincentian Social Justice Representatives are “instructing the ignorant” in their statement in support of our Muslim brothers and sisters. The same is true of the two Ladies of Charity who share reflections on the Pope’s teaching on the environment, and also for literacy programs in many of our associations.

### Laudato Si—A Reflection

*Continued from page 1*

rioration of our common home,” and appeals for an integrated and global dialogue to address the health and future of our planet.

The Pope begins with the facts. The very first chapter, entitled “What is Happening to our Common Home” is a summary of the various environmental problems that confront our world. The Pope outlines a litany of ecological problems, global warming chief among them, that include air and water pollution, the wanton destruction of forests, the wasteful use of resources and many more.

Climate and environmental scientists alike confirm that the Pope’s science is correct. “When reciting facts, the Pope aligns himself squarely with mainstream scientific thinking. Indeed, those sections of the document could serve as a syllabus for Environmental Science 101 in just about any college classroom.” [NYT June 19, 2015]

On the issue of Global Warming, the sentences everyone was looking for arrive near the beginning, with a powerful declaration: “A very solid scientific consensus indicates that we are presently witnessing a disturbing warming of the climatic system....due to the great concentration of greenhouse gases ... released mainly as a result of human activity.” [23]

Francis goes on to cite the dangerous secondary effects of climate change, affecting the availability of essential resources like drinking water; energy and agricultural production in warmer regions; and the extinction of part of the planet’s biodiversity. Francis asserts that climate change is “one of the principal challenges facing humanity in our day.” [25]

Pope Francis and world scientists agree that the devastating effects of climate change and overall environmental deg-

radation will most harshly affect the poor. For example, the depletion of fishing reserves especially hurts small fishing communities without the means to replace those resources; water pollution particularly affects the poor who cannot buy bottled water; and rises in the sea level mainly affect impoverished coastal populations who have nowhere else to go. [48]

Francis urges us to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor. [49] “We are not faced with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather one complex crisis which is both social and environmental. [139] Francis calls this perspective the “Integral Ecology” - a global obligation to protect creation, and to nurture rather than diminish the possibilities of both nature and humanity.

The core of the argument stems from our high school biology definition of ecology: the study of how living things and their environment interact. The majesty of the argument is that because human dignity finds its roots in our common creation, caring for our fellow citizen and caring for our environment are one and the same thing. Pope Francis promotes a “civilization of love” and a “culture of care,” wherein we live in solidarity with all creatures, promote the common good, and defend the environment.

Make no mistake, “Laudato Si” is a challenge to those of us who live in developed countries. We must examine our consumer lifestyles. Pope Francis writes, “Everyone’s talents and involvement are needed to redress the damage caused by human abuse of God’s creation.” [14]. This call to action should be taken up with urgency by individuals, organizations and governments. Indeed our future, the future of our world, and the needs of generations to come will depend on it.





Working as an assembly line, the **Ladies of Charity of Little Rock** assembled 162 Christmas gift bags, meeting their goal to have one for each resident, both men and women, at two nursing homes. The administrators at the homes were very happy to be chosen, noting that some of the residents have no family. President Nancy Bennett reports she was "jumping for joy" at the generosity of the women. Vincentian Spiritual Moderator Sr. Doris Moore, DC, accompanied the group who delivered the bags and they all stayed to visit with the residents and do mini-manicures.



The **Los Angeles Ladies of Charity** had a joyful time gathering many items such as small toys, toothbrushes, candy and more, enough to fill 75 baskets which they then delivered to Guardian Angel School. They surprised classrooms with children from ages four to twelve. The Ladies describe the children's faces as priceless.



The **Nashville Ladies of Charity (LOC)** had a whirlwind year and closed the year with a bang. In October the group held a Christmas and Silent Auction. Three long-time supporters were honored. Philip Breen has provided spiritual guidance as chaplain. Peffen (seated right) has served in many capacities as president of the local association and national president. She is currently on the Long Range Planning Committee and has been a chairman for the semi-annual consignment sales. To celebrate the LOC in 1977 and has served in many capacities, including auctioneer and stock chairman for the sales. The gala's auction is to support LOC's work in the community. To close out the year, the group assembled and distributed 876 food baskets, each containing a variety of items. Over 60 volunteers participated, led by Margie Druff.





**Above and left: The Ladies of Charity of Albany, N.Y.** received two grants to support their work at two locations of Mary's Corner, centers which serve parents and their children from birth to age 4. The Standish Family Fund of the Community Foundation for the Greater Capital Region granted \$1000 for the purchase of books. The Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary (SNJM) awarded a \$5000 SNJM Ministry Grant for the purchase of baby food, formula, diapers, bath time needs, clothing, books, strollers, pack and play etc., all items distributed at Mary's Corner. Sr. Joyce Houle, who applied for the SNJM grant, is pictured interviewing a young mother.



Roll out the barrels! Lady of Charity Eileen Summers volunteers with the Fresh Start program of the **Buffalo** association where packages of bedding, dishes, utensils, and other basic household necessities are assembled for families or individuals starting over after fire, abuse, or other types of life changing events. She was concerned that often the program's supplies are exhausted and requests cannot be met and so she developed an innovative solution. After obtaining a donation of barrels and placing appropriate signs on them, Eileen found four fire halls, four churches and two Knights of Columbus centers to accept the barrels. She will be contacted for pick-up as they are filled.



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**The Ladies of Charity of Knoxville, Tenn.** received a \$32,500 grant from St. Mary's Legacy Foundation to enable them to continue providing food and nourishment to the disadvantaged. The Ladies serve approximately 234,000 meals to 26,000 hungry people annually.





*“To serve rather than to be served”*

## Catherine Labouré, D.C. Simple, Humble Servant of Persons Living in Poverty

Carol Schumer, D.C.



Born on May 2, 1806 and named Zoé by Pierre, a prosperous farmer, and Madeleine Gontard, her parents, she was the ninth of 11 surviving children. She was the darling of her father and the comfort of her mother. When Zoé was 9, her mom died, even though of strong stock, with help during her 17 pregnancies and in raising her offspring. This devastating blow stunned the Labouré family, especially Zoé, who was much attached. In her desolation, the young girl hugged a statue of Our Lady, and whispered, “Now ... you will be my mother!” The Virgin Mary became so real to her adopted daughter that Zoé prayed constantly to see her.

On the night of July 18, only 3 months after becoming a Seminary Sister in Paris, Zoé, now Catherine, was led to the chapel by an angelic messenger. There she beheld and spoke with Mary who told Catherine that she would be given a special mission which would entail personal suffering even as it blessed many. Later that same year, during evening meditations on November 27, Catherine had a vision of Mary, standing on a globe, framed with the words, “O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee.” Catherine heard a voice explaining a medal of this image was to be struck



and that everyone who wore it in faith would receive abundant graces. Then the picture turned, showing the back side, featuring the letter M, topped by a cross on a beam and two hearts underneath, one surrounded by a crown of thorns and the second pierced with a sword. Twelve stars encircled the oval. Within two years, the medal was made, widely circulated and worn by millions. Wondrous favors resulted. Recipients began calling it “Miraculous.”



For 46 years, Catherine’s identity as the person who received the visions remained a secret to all except a few superiors. However, months before her death in December, 1876, because one of Mary’s requests was not yet fulfilled, Catherine chose to speak with her Sister Servant (superior.) As a result, a statue of Mary holding a golden globe was fashioned and Catherine found peace of mind and heart.

Catherine lived her life with her sisters as a simple religious woman serving in Reuilly. She encountered human misery as she ministered at the hospice, helping those who were sick, old, poor and marginalized. In complete obscurity she loved freely, was pleasant and well-liked. In truth, Catherine achieved nothing out of the ordinary and today, she invites us to do the same.

Her cause for sanctity began in 1895, leading in 1933 to the exhuming of her body which was found incorrupt. It’s now honored in the chapel of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal at the Rue du Bac in Paris.



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