

LADIES OF CHARITY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA® SERVICETTE

"To serve rather than to be served"



AIC USA

VOL. 52, Nº4
FALL 2012

RE-FOUNDED LADIES OF CHARITY~WELCOME, LADIES OF CHARITY, INDIANAPOLIS

Mary Nell Williams



Officers of the Indianapolis association show their joy following their installation. From left, Mary Nell Williams and Barb Killian, co-presidents; Valerie Roraus, president elect; Jude Magers, spiritual moderator; and Vera Jeter, secretary.

In November, 1945, four women began a Ladies of Charity association in Indianapolis. They continued to serve the needs of the poor and vulnerable in the area until the early 1980s when, because of health, age and death, they formally disbanded. In the fall of 1997, several women initiated a discernment regarding the re-founding of the Ladies of Charity, Indianapolis. For many reasons, the timing was not right. In the spring of 2011, while visiting at Mater Dei Retreat and Spirituality Center, Evansville, Ind., Valerie Roraus and Val Kappes asked Sr. Sharon Richardt, DC, if there was somewhere they as lay women could serve. She directed them to Jude Magers, a Daughter of Charity affiliate in Indianapolis. That summer,

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LCUSA 12TH ANNUAL NATIONAL ASSEMBLY 2012

Lucky Van De Gejuchte, Communications Committee

The Ladies of Charity of the Archdiocese of Washington (ADW) hosted over 250 Ladies of Charity at an assembly in Bethesda, Md., that all will remember. The theme "Giving in Faith and Love" was reflected by the speakers and a variety of workshops ranging from Breaking the Cycle of Poverty and Homelessness in the Nation's Capital to Resources for Local Systemic Change. Another workshop focused on training lay women to succeed the many Daughters and Sisters of Charity who have mentored associations over the years. The presentations, workshops and round table discussions were directly linked to members discovering ways to "Give in Faith and Love" by using tools of evangelization, health care and systemic change.



Debra Tidwell-Peters leading the assembly in song.

Keynote speaker Fr. Gregory Gay, CM, superior general of the Congregation of the Mission and 23rd successor to St. Vincent de Paul, stated that "Giving in Faith and Love" goes to the heart of what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ and a bearer of the Vincentian charism. Fr. Gay gave us his version of "The Vincentian AAA: Accompaniment, Action, and Advocacy."

Monsignor Raymond G. East, pastor of St. Teresa of Avila in Washington D.C., former vicar for evangelization for ADW spoke on "St. Vincent de Paul and

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Co-Chairs Rita Robinson and Deborah Self provide a warm and humorous welcome to the assembly.



Keynote speaker Fr. G. Gregory Gay, CM, describes "The Vincentian AAA."

Christmas Blessings
From the Ladies of Charity



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.

SERVICETTE NEWS DEADLINE

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

Monday, January 14, 2013

Articles and photos can be sent by e-mail to:

Kathleen.sieracki@gmail.com

(Please note new email address)

Articles and photos should be sent separately and not within the text document.

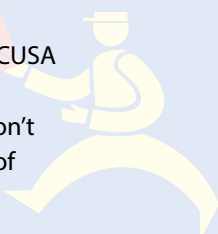
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ARE YOU MOVING?

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



Dr. Jan Hinrichsen

Bishop David A. Zubik
Episcopal Chairman

Through the kindness of good friends, I was invited to accompany them on a cruise which visited seven countries—Germany, Sweden, Estonia, Russia, Finland, Denmark and Holland.

"The world is a book," St. Augustine wrote, "and those who do not travel read only one page." Never having been on a cruise before, I really didn't know what to expect when I opened that book. During the 10 day cruise, places and things I had only read about felt my footprints.

During this trip I developed a much deeper appreciation for the diversity of cultures and the unique histories that are part and parcel of the countries I visited. I also was given a deeper understanding and appreciation on my part for God's love and how he provides for us no matter the circumstances. Let me explain.

There I am on a cruise ship, and I broke a tooth right in half. With our next stop scheduled for Kiel, Germany, the ship's crew called ahead and secured an appointment for me with a dentist. That is how I met Dr. Jan Hinrichsen.

Riding in the cab through the streets of Kiel, a beautiful port on the Baltic, to Dr. Hinrichsen's office, I wasn't paying too much attention to the sights and sounds I passed. All I could think about was the discomfort I was experiencing, as well as other worries. How would I communicate with the doctor and his staff if no one spoke English? What would it cost? How was I going to pay? This is the way I worry about things, poring over each and every possible outcome, each and every possible problem,

and trying to come up with answers before anything has even happened.

As I arrived at the dentist's office, I was greeted by the warm and open smiles of his staff, but not a word of English. After waiting for two and a half hours, I finally got into the dental chair and in the hands of a professional. I was so grateful that not only did he know his craft, but that he could also speak English. He did his job like an artisan. I was able to pay him and I was soon on my way, free of discomfort and ready to get on with my travels.

Experiencing a broken tooth is a reminder again that we are all vulnerable. One moment we are seeing the world, the next moment we are reminded of our frailties. That broken tooth reminded me again of how we can see God's hand in every experience of life. While I was focused solely on the discomfort and a hundred other worries that I conjured up in my imagination, God was delivering me up to a kind and caring man.

"Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?" (Matthew 6:26) I have always understood that message of God's care for each of us. But at times, I have failed to realize that God accomplishes that care through each of us. I'm not sure Dr. Hinrichsen will realize how important his outreach was to me. I'm even less sure he would recognize his help as an extension of God's care.

That's something we don't often think about. But that is what we are called to do, you and me. The experience of a broken tooth reminded me that in my own words and my own deeds, I must be a reflection of God's love and care every day. Each of us must always remember that we need to be his hands and his heart for all of God's creation. We never know when, but we can be certain that it will happen over and over again. We will be called to represent his love and his concern for another as Dr. Hinrichsen did for me. †



President's Message

Lucy Ann Saunders
LCUSA President

As the 12th annual LCUSA National Assembly hosted by the Archdiocese of Washington Ladies of Charity wraps up, I am also wrapping up my term as LCUSA president. What a quick two years!! Where does time go? They say if you are having fun, it goes very quickly. I guess I have had fun because two years will become a reality December 31, 2012.

There is so much to say about being LCUSA president serving each you as members of a national organization. The support, the camaraderie and the partnerships developed will always be remembered as the benefits of this position. Having the opportunity to visit with many of the local associations has enriched my life as a Lady of Charity. For this I will be forever grateful. To quote St. John Mary Vianney, "Neither wealth, nor honors, nor vanity can make us happy during our life on earth, but only attachment to the service of God, when we are fortunate enough to realize that and to carry it out properly."

With a new chapter beginning in 2013, let us all be open to the needs of our national organization and the needs of our brothers and sisters in Christ. In

today's world, we all depend on each other more than ever. The Ladies of Charity together as a team can lift the spirits and dignity of individuals as they strive to get ahead. We need to lean on each other and develop a spiritual life and bond to strengthen our willingness, desire and fortitude to continue the Vincentian legacy in this era of economic downturn. Advocacy and Systemic Change are tools that we have available to meet the challenges facing today's society. It won't be easy but anything worthwhile is not easy.

LCUSA's mission of "providing Vincentian leadership to women acting together against all forms of poverty" is a special calling to members. I have seen for myself the many ways each of you is addressing the various forms of poverty by offering a hand up to those you work with, offering an opportunity for them to speak so you can listen, giving them the tools to step up in various situations to deal with their challenges. This is what we are about as Ladies of Charity. This is what you are about as a Lady of Charity. In 1963, Pope Paul VI spoke about the special role of women when addressing leaders of an Italian Women's Catholic Action group: "Women are a sure means for accomplishing the urgent task of reassembling the Christian Community. Women prove themselves not only capable of collaboration in good works . . . When they set an objective for themselves they know how to achieve it." Ladies these words also tell the story of us as Ladies of Charity serving today.

Remember that LCUSA is here to serve you. All of us on the national board have been elected to be your servant leaders. Our position is to be a helping hand to you and those you serve. Keep the faith and make it come alive in your everyday life, especially in this Year of Faith being celebrated worldwide. Our time, talent and treasure are God's gifts to us. Use them wisely. Share the spirit with those you serve.

Again, thank you for all you do and continue to do. Give LCUSA's new officers and board your support and prayers

so they too can achieve a long lasting future for our national organization and for you. In closing out my term as president, I am very pleased that each of LCUSA's members will be receiving a copy of the *Servicette*, providing information to each member about our national and local organizations. You are asked to contribute to this quarterly newsletter so other associations can learn from your achievements while sharing new ideas to further the charitable and corporal works of mercy that are so numerous. All of us together are required to be there for those less fortunate following the footsteps of St. Vincent and St. Louise so their legacy can be kept alive in the years ahead.

I appreciate all that you are and all that you do in the name of justice and love for those you serve. Your gift to me has been the many personal experiences I have had as president. That gift will be cherished for years to come. As St. Louise de Marillac said, "How obvious it is that God loves you since he gives you so many opportunities of serving him." God has definitely shown his love to all of us as Ladies of Charity.

"Lord pour out on us the spirit of understanding, truth and peace. Help us to strive with all our hearts to know what is pleasing to you, and when we know your will, make us determined to do it."†

(Vincentian Discernment Prayer)

SUPERIOR GENERAL TO VISIT U.S. CITIES

Father Gregory Gay, Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission, will visit the United States in 2013. Places and dates of particular interest to Ladies of Charity are:

Los Angeles, January 26
Dallas, February 2
North Little Rock, February 6
New Orleans, February 9
St. Louis, February 16
Chicago, February 20

Dates to Remember

- January 4, 2013**
Feast of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton
- February 10-13, 2013**
Catholic Social Ministry Gathering
Washington, DC
- March 13-19, 2013**
AIC Delegate Assembly
Bangkok, Thailand
- March 15, 2013**
Feast of St. Louise de Marillac
- April 10-14, 2013**
LCUSA Spring Board Meeting
- September 18-22, 2013**
LCUSA National Assembly
San Jose, Calif.



the New Evangelization.” He described how the Vincentian charism can be united with Pope Benedict’s new evangelization. Msgr. East suggested three guidelines: *Invite, Ignite, and Excite*.

Sister Carol Keehan, DC, president and chief executive officer of the Catholic Health Association of the United States, focused on “St. Vincent de Paul and the Care of the Sick: What Would He Do Today?” Sr. Carol shared some of the heritage of St. Vincent and his approach to the needs of the vulnerable and the sick and gave a detailed and factual description of the Affordable Health Care Act, including how it will benefit people currently living without health care coverage. She stated that it was not the perfect solution, but something to start with and could be improved upon affording everyone access to affordable health care.

The Junior Ladies of Charity were recognized and certificates were presented to each Junior association and their moderators for the work done during this past year. A thank you was given to the associations participating in the tee-shirt design contest. Two videos on Junior groups in Pittsburgh and ADW were shown.

To Rita Robinson, Deborah Self and their entire committee, thank you and congratulations on a very successful national assembly. Your kindness and hospitality were appreciated by all who attended. Fellowship and renewing of friendships, along with new ones being formed, will provide for better communication in the future within and among the different regions as *LCUSA welcomes local associations to host annual national assemblies in their cities and towns.* †



Kathleen Hager's Legacy Lives on Through the Works of the Ladies of Charity

Kathleen Sieracki, Diocese of Buffalo

In 2006, LCUSA received a bequest from the estate of Kathleen Hager of Pittsburgh. The money was invested and each year the interest income funds grants awarded in her name to support hands-on projects initiated by local associations. Kathleen Hager Grant recipients for 2012 are from three regions.



Left: Francine Hovanec, mid-atlantic regional v.p. congratulates Donna Churray, president of Pittsburgh LOC. **Right:** Lydia Noche, a director from the mid-atlantic region, receives the grant for the Uniontown, Pa. association from Francine.

In the Mid-Atlantic, the Pittsburgh association applied on behalf of six parish groups. Members at All Saints clothe and feed homeless children. Ladies of Charity at St. Damien of Molokai assist a soup kitchen serving 125 senior citizens, while the women of St. Paul's Cathedral provide lunches for a women's shelter. Members at St. Patrick provide gift/food baskets at Easter and Christmas and the Corpus Christi group purchases toiletries for local elderly religious women. Holy Redeemer purchases gifts for shut-ins who are visited and taken communion.



Joan Stanard, a director from the north central region, presenting a Hager grant to Theresa Dorsey of Cincinnati.

Also in the Mid-Atlantic, the St. Gertrude Ladies of Charity submitted a successful request for funds to help feed poor and indigent residents of Cincinnati. In Uniontown, Pa., members will develop relationships with families and aim to help them move out of poverty, an opportunity for Systemic Change in their lives. The grant will be a resource should any of the families face a financial crisis.

Representing the North Central Region, the Ladies of Charity of Quincy, Ill., will use their grant to help support food programs which served over 13,000 people in 2011.

Three associations in the Northeastern Region, all in the state of New York, were grant recipients. Elmira will expand its



Left: Maureen Driskill, northeastern regional v.p., presents a Kathleen Hager grant to Lanie Cummings, past president of Binghampton LOC. **Right:** Deborah Sullivan, president of Elmira LOC accepting a grant check from Maureen.

participation in the Elmira Community Kitchen and provide balanced meals 10 days during the year. Working through nurses at eight schools, the association in Binghampton provides clothing and hygiene products to students who are inadequately prepared for school. In Schenectady, on the first Saturday of each month, members organize "Breakfast with the Ladies" at the Schenectady City Mission Life Skills Center, providing cooking and nutrition advice, and importantly, spending time listening to the residents.

In 2000, LCUSA adopted a national focus on Reading Enrichment. Named for a former national president, Diane Downey Grants are available to local associations with hands-on reading programs. Two associations applied for and were awarded Downey grants in 2012. In Saratoga, N.Y., members purchase books and read to children at a regional Catholic school. The books are left in the school so the children can continue reading on their own. At All Saints parish in the Pittsburgh suburb of Etna, the women will purchase videos, books and magazine subscriptions to supplement their participation in the religious education program.

The grants awarded this year totaled \$9050. All association presidents will again receive a mailing in January detailing instructions, application forms and deadlines for 2013. A needs analysis in advance of the mailing will enable associations to make application in a timely manner. The availability of Hager and Downey grants is one of the many important ways LCUSA supports the work of member associations. †

*With Hope in the
Resurrection
We Honor the Memory of*



Kathleen Coco

Please keep the family of Kathleen Coco in your prayers. Kathy was elected to LCUSA's board in September as North Central Vice President. She suffered an aneurysm and passed away on October 18th.

AIC REPORT

MARGARET HANSON
AIC Representative



The 2011-2013 Operational Guidelines for the International Association of Charities (AIC), the worldwide umbrella organization for the Ladies of Charity, were presented in the last issue of the *Servicette*.

Following the promulgation of the guidelines, AIC issued two publications in 2011 to assist in implementation. One is a resource pamphlet titled “Fundraising – an essential element in the development of every local association,” and the other is a spiritual document, “The Pedagogy of God” by Fr. Eli Chavez, CM, a native of Brazil, who is the present Spiritual Advisor to AIC, succeeding Fr. Manuel Ginete, CM, now serving in the newly-established country of South Sudan. AIC promoted the ideals of the guidelines in the Latin American Seminar conducted in Sao Paulo, Brazil in April, 2012. Laurence de la

Brosse, AIC President, and Natalie Monteza, Secretary General, attended with the Latin American animators. Brazil is the largest member country in South America with 2300 volunteers in 145 associations.

It is not too soon to plan for the next international assembly which will be held March 14-17, 2013, in Bangkok, Thailand. The theme will be a qualitative evaluation of the application of the 2011-2013 Operational Guidelines on education. This will be the first AIC assembly to be held in Asia where AIC is growing not only in Thailand, but also Vietnam, Indonesia, Japan, the Philippines and Taiwan. In any discussion concerning an assembly there is a need to promote and encourage candidates for leadership positions at every level of the organization.

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, under the direction of St. Vincent de Paul, was to perform charitable works for those in need, the number of members will have increased 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. †



AIC Madagascar volunteers discuss the role of education during their national assembly.

Twinning with Madagascar

The Friday afternoon liturgy at the LCUSA national assembly included a collection for AIC Madagascar. Proceeds were \$2585 and were combined with \$1955 received earlier. In total, a twinning donation of \$4540 will be sent to AIC for Madagascar. Thanks are due to Molly and Irene Siedlarczyk and Doris Leskovich for their dedicated efforts on behalf of Madagascar.

The AIC volunteers in Madagascar also had a national assembly recently, held in the deep southern part of the

country. The theme was “A Complete Education, A Way to Build a New Society of Justice and Peace.” Sixty volunteers wanted to attend, but only 40 were able to go since the south is an area of political instability, with violent clashes between farmers and rustlers.

According to Rose de Lima Ramanankavana of AIC Madagascar, “You may know that we are still living among a great political [and] social crisis and as usual the first victims are the poorest ones.” A detailed descrip-



Molly (back to camera) and Irene Siedlarczyk discuss the Madagascar twinning project.

tion of programs in Madagascar supported by the twinning project may be found at the LCUSA website: <http://aic.ladiesofcharity.us> †

Vincentian Family Explores Systemic Change

Fran Schmidt and Kathy Kavanaugh
Diocese of Albany

“**B**e affective and effective.” St. Vincent de Paul repeated this theme over and over again. Attending the Vincentian Family Explores Systemic Change Workshop, members of the Vincentian Family gathered to study how to best direct their efforts for the purpose of eliminating poverty. It was an inspiring and practical presentation on August 24-25 at the Loyola House of Retreat, Morristown, N.J. Many members of the Vincentian Family and employees of their outreach sites, including seven Ladies of Charity, were present as participants listened, learned and explored practical applications of Vincentian Systemic Change in their own areas of service. Sr. CJ Willie, SC, was the main presenter and her topics included “Changing Systems, Changing Lives” and “History of Systemic Change in the Vincentian Family.” Other members of the planning committee made excellent presentations as well. James Addison, an associate of the Sisters of Charity of N.Y., shared his years of experience working with people who are homeless. Workshops were presented by a number of wonderful outreach site leaders all of which were most inspiring and provided wonderful prototypes for participants to apply to their own work.

Although the term “Systemic Change” is a relatively contemporary term, the Vincentian history of Systemic Change originates with St. Vincent who was constantly insisting that his followers not just perform good works, but also make the effort to fully understand poverty from the eyes of those served, and from there move forward to help change the social system that prevents people from escaping generational poverty. The key is to journey with those living in poverty, using a humble and faith-directed heart, before making changes to the environment. Systemic Change is a two-part initiative, the first being charity



Natalie Boone (left to right), Mary Ann Dantuono, Marilyn Martone, Fran Schmidt, Kathleen Sieracki, Kathy Kavanaugh and Sally Kingsley represented LCUSA at the August Systemic Change workshop.

which meets the immediate needs of the people and the second being advocacy or justice, which is needed to change the structural causes. For an even deeper understanding, everyone was urged to read “Seeds of Hope, Stories of Systemic Change,” written by the members of the Vincentian Family’s commission for promoting systemic change. Copies of this book are available through the National Service Center.

With the Vincentian charism in mind, participants listened to the stories of persons involved with several very successful Vincentian sites. At the close of the workshops, everyone gathered in groups and renewed the focus to advocate for women due to their increasing poverty numbers and their lack of equality of wages in the workplace and ownership of property. Each group brainstormed on how to bring Systemic Change within service environments.

Each branch of the Vincentian Family represented at the workshop met to discuss next steps. LOC members reported these ideas: Our faith brought us all together, so we need to take our faith out to each person we meet. We’ve had our perceptions changed from “the poor” to “people living in poverty.” We want to identify the needs in our own areas, and form relationships by listening. A follow-up workshop is needed to help develop practical applications of what was learned during the weekend.

All who attended the workshop agreed that the message of Systemic Change must reach everyone. Networking first among the respective groups and then the other members of the Vincentian Family will help make Systemic Change a reality. Change does not always happen quickly but everyone must keep moving forward. With God all things are possible. †

ATTENTION SERVICETTE SUBSCRIBERS

Active members of local associations affiliated with LCUSA receive free subscriptions to the Servicette. For others, the subscription is \$5 per year and now is the time to renew for 2013. Send your check to:

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The new officers of the Indianapolis association were blessed on September 22nd. From left, they are Valerie Roraus, Val Kappes (treasurer), Vera Jeter, Barb Killian and Mary Nell Williams.

Jude asked a fellow Daughter of Charity affiliate, Mary Nell Williams, to join her in evaluating the idea. Jude and Mary Nell explored the Ladies of Charity USA and also sought information regarding the previous Indianapolis association. Little historical information was available. Work continued and women known to have good Vincentian hearts were individually asked if they would like to explore and discern their own call to this ministry.

In January, 2012, eight women gathered to hear more about the Ladies of Charity and to speak about their own lives. The participants received discernment questions to see if they felt called to continue and then, if yes, would be willing to attend a retreat at Mater Dei in April, where further discernment would occur. Jude and Mary Nell prepared the contents of the retreat

and invited Sr. Fran Ryan, DC, LCUSA Spiritual Moderator, to be a presenter. Officers and a spiritual moderator were elected at the close of the retreat. All those who attended the retreat wished to continue to form an association.

Their initial meeting was held in June, and meetings have occurred monthly since. The core group has worked very hard to establish their foundation, including applying for a charter, appealing for seed money, establishing bank accounts, writing the articles of incorporation, obtaining the tax identification number and writing the bylaws. The founders have been very touched in experiencing many signs from God along the way which supported their efforts.

At a Mass on September 22, the officers were installed and a total of 17 women were blessed as the charter members of the re-founded association. As a symbol of their tie to LCUSA, white roses in a blue vase that were brought from the 2012 National Assembly were present at the Mass and the reception that followed. During the course of all of their work during the past 15 months, the members have been and continue to be deliberate in their remembrance of the Ladies of Charity of Indianapolis who preceded them.

The members of the newly established group remain very grateful for all of the support and encouragement offered by LCUSA and in particular Lucy Saunders, Sr. Fran Ryan and Maureen McMillan, and local associations including Evansville, Milwaukee, and Birmingham, as well as many Daughters of Charity around the country. They look forward to continued discernment regarding additional education, ministries and possible partnerships that God is calling them to explore, as well as continued association with LCUSA. †

Book Review



God's Hotel

Reviewed by Marilyn Martone

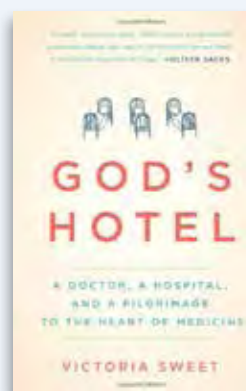
Health care is an important issue in our society. Technology has not only improved treatment but it has also helped escalate costs to astronomical heights. In addition, people are living longer and using greater amounts of health care. But medicine was not always practiced this way.

Victoria Sweet's book, *God's Hotel*, reminds us that medicine is still fundamentally a sacred calling. As a physician who worked at Laguna Honda, the

last almshouse in the country, she draws connections between her work there and the way medicine was practiced in the Middle Ages. At Laguna Honda, the focus was patient centered and because of the lack of funds much more low-tech. Yet often the care was superior to a much better equipped hospital.

At Laguna Honda, physicians took time to listen, to diagnose, to be present. The patients were people with remarkable stories, many of which she recounts in this book.

Dr. Sweet also pursued a doctorate in the history of medicine, focusing on the work of a German nun Hildegard of Bingen. Because Hildegard was also a mystic and theologian as well as



practitioner of medicine, there was a depth to her work that is missing from modern medicine. Much of what Dr. Sweet found in Hildegard's work she applied at Laguna Honda. While modern medicine views the body as a machine to be repaired, Hildegard viewed the body as a garden

to be tended. This metaphor encourages a persistent tending where relationships between patients and physicians are of paramount importance.

Eventually Laguna Honda was closed and replaced with a more modern facility. After reading *God's Hotel*, however, one cannot help but wonder if something of the utmost importance was not lost in the transition. †

LCUSA NEWS

ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON INSTALLS NEW BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Toni K. Gaines

In the midst of planning the 12th Annual LCUSA National Assembly, the Archdiocese of Washington association elected a new board of directors to serve for the next two-year term. On August 4, Sr. Catherine Fitzgerald, DC, spiritual moderator, officiated at the installation ceremony held at Providence Hospital. Prayers and congratulations are extended to the ladies as they continue to serve the needy throughout the archdiocese with humility, simplicity and charity. †



The newly installed officers for the Archdiocese of Washington are (front row, left to right) Mary Ann Tretler, secretary; Rita Robinson, president; Peggy Campbell, second vice-president; (back row, left to right) Toni Gaines, treasurer; Sr. Catherine Fitzgerald, DC, spiritual moderator; Kendra Jochum, first vice-president.

ARCHDIOCESE OF WASH., DC LOC LAUNCH WEBSITE

Ladies of Charity of ADW thank web designer Beth Nicol for her expertise, patience and dedication in developing their new website. Visit www.ladiesofcharityadw.org to see how the Ladies of Washington are working to improve their services to the marginalized within their community. †

LYNCHBURG ASSOCIATION WELCOMES LUCY SAUNDERS

Linda VanScooter, President

On July 18, the Ladies of Charity of Holy Cross Church in Lynchburg, Va., welcomed Lucy Saunders, president of LCUSA. This was the first time Lynchburg had a visitor from LCUSA. Lucy said that communication is a two way street and she is definitely a great communicator.

Holy Cross has had circles of women in Ladies of Charity since 1898. The Ladies are a vital part of the Holy Cross parish community, instrumental in many ministries. Lucy spoke on the history of the national organization, formed to bring together the Ladies of Charity associations across the country.

Membership in the national organization as well as in the local circles has decreased over the years. Holy Cross was the only Catholic church in the area for years and there were 13 circles. Today there are other Catholic churches but Holy Cross has the only Ladies of Charity group in the state of Virginia and only four circles remain.



Lucy Saunders visited Holy Cross Church in Lynchburg, Va.

Editor's note: We apologize that this group was misidentified in the last issue.

Lucy spoke of the need to exchange ideas. She also spoke about the international aspects of charity including the LCUSA twinning project with Madagascar. Lynchburg members were also able to share information about their activities, including support for Miriam's House and Gateway, transitional homes for women and men, parish-wide baby showers for Blue Ridge Pregnancy Center and Christmas bags for home-bound parishioners. Lynchburg LOC continue their service to those less fortunate through the leadership of women who know that it is better to serve rather than be served. †



Kudos! On September 27, Father Donald J. Harrington, CM, president of St. John's University, conferred an Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree upon Sister Louise Gallahue, DC, visitatrix of the St. Louise Province of the Daughters of Charity, in recognition of the work of all the Daughters. On October 2, Sister Louise accepted a Catholic Charities Centennial Medal presented to honor the commitment of the Daughters of Charity to the mission of Catholic Charities. Congratulations to our fellow Vincentian Family member.

Introducing Chris Young, Western Region

Kathleen Sieracki, Servicette Editor

Chris Young is associate editor of the Intermountain Catholic, the weekly newspaper of the Diocese of Salt Lake City, with circulation of 15,000 copies per issue. In 2003, she was assigned to research an article on the Ladies of Charity and became a member herself immediately after completing her interviews.



The Diocese of Salt Lake City includes 47 parishes throughout the state of Utah. There are Ladies of Charity associations in two of the parishes: 35 members at Our Lady of Lourdes in Salt Lake and 35 women at St. Olaf in Bountiful. Both groups are actively involved in providing food assistance, supplementing other community resources.

The population in Utah has been growing in recent years, including wealthier people leaving California for better real estate values and also a surge in Hispanic immigration. When asked about the legal status of the Latino people, Sr. Germaine Sarazin, DC, stated "When hungry people come to us for food, we don't ask for papers." Catholics comprise about 30 percent of Utah's population and about 80 percent of Catholics are Hispanic.

In addition to her professional work and Ladies of Charity activities, Chris is actively involved in other church activities. She is a former parish director of religious education and has earned a Master's Degree in Theology in Lay Ecclesial Ministry through an on-line program from Notre Dame University. Chris is also involved in the Cursillo movement. After attending a three day weekend program, participants are sent out to evangelize others.

A native of Utah, Chris enjoys skiing, golf and gardening. She was a member of the LCUSA national board from 2006-2010 and attended the AIC delegate assembly in Mexico City in 2009. †

Collaboration— A Vincentian Virtue

Gayle Johnson, President Elect

Collaboration has been defined as the greater good that can be accomplished by a number of similar entities working together, a goodness that far exceeds the sum total of individual efforts.

The Vincentian Family Collaborators held a meeting on Monday and Tuesday, August 20–21 in St. Louis, Mo. The first session consisted of orientation for the new collaborators: Sr. Claire Debes, DC; Sr. Carol Rogers, SCN; Fr. Bernie Tracey, CM; and Jessica Werner, VLM. It was followed by the general session where the agenda for the Vincentian Family Leadership meeting in New Orleans, October 11–12, was revised to include video interviews of young adult Vincentian leaders on how they are living the charism and how to involve young adults more in the Vincentian family. During the meeting in New Orleans the leaders of the various branches of the Family provided feedback on the four goals established by the leadership at their meeting last year.

The collaborators previewed the agenda, program and materials for the regional meetings held in Morristown, N.J., August 24–25 and in Elizabeth, N.J., October 26–27. Based on the success of these meetings additional regional meetings will be scheduled in 2013. Subcommittees worked on communication via the website and the 2013 annual Vincentian Family gathering to be held at the Marten House in Indianapolis, on Oct. 25–27, 2013. The planning resulted in a recommendation for inclusion of a greater number of young adults in all sessions and inclusion of representatives from individuals being served by the branches of the Family. †

ADVOCACY CONNECTIONS Advocacy Committee Seeks Information

Constance O'Brien

Vincent de Paul said "Charity embraces justice." Advocacy links our faith with justice.

LCUSA's Advocacy Committee is seeking examples of projects and volunteerism within local associations surrounding the issue of "Violence against Women." This issue

may include domestic violence, sexual abuse and assault and trafficking, but there are other forms of violence against women that exist within our society as well. Your local association may be involved in outreach, education, advocacy, literacy, health care, counseling, or some other form of intervention.

If your local association (or a group within your association) is involved in this kind of project, please provide a description of the activities. The advocacy committee is compiling this information as part of a national advocacy project. Thank you in advance for your submission.

Please email your information to Constance O'Brien at constance.obrien@gmail.com. †

THE 2012 LCUSA ANNUAL APPEAL

Lucy Ann Saunders, LCUSA President

As 2012 comes to a close, LCUSA begins its Annual Appeal. A brochure and letter will be arriving soon in your mailbox requesting your participation in the support of LCUSA's mission and goals. The Annual Appeal gives individual members, associations and friends an opportunity to partner with LCUSA as a national organization, uniting women in their service of those less fortunate.

LCUSA's future requires modern tools of communication together with office staff to assist local associations to expand and improve services in their communities. These same tools are needed to continue the collaborative work with our Vincentian Family organizations and to create vital links with the International Association of Charities (AIC).

Your dollars will help LCUSA meet these challenges and engage members actively in today's society as persons strive to become independent and hopeful. I know you want to be a part of this positive action that needs the support of all of us as members, friends and associates of the Ladies of Charity.



The 2012 Annual Appeal will enable LCUSA to continue its efforts to support members and their communities as they serve those less fortunate, both nationally and internationally.

For The Ladies of Charity in the USA

- Provide disaster relief as experienced by New York and New Jersey through Vincentian Family members. 2011 Annual Appeal Funds were available to donate \$5,000 to help those agencies and programs most in need because of the damage caused by Superstorm Sandy.
- Provide on-site workshops to train and educate members on advocacy and systemic change.
- Provide training for lay moderators through personal workshops and materials prepared by spiritual moderators who serve on the national and local levels.

For The International Vincentian Family

- Increase aid to Madagascar and the Ukraine for programs that involve women and children.
- Support the Daughters of Charity's international work in the developing world to include literacy and nutrition.

Funding from the 2012 Annual Appeal will continue the valuable support provided to the local associations by LCUSA:

- Website with tools, resources, and connections to our Vincentian Family.
- On-line shopping for member supplies.
- National office to serve the associations with needed materials and support to operate as an LCUSA association.
- Scholarships for association members to attend the National Assembly in San Jose.
- Grants to support local associations in the areas of literacy and direct assistance to those living in poverty.

The 2012 Annual Appeal will support the national and international collaborations with the Vincentian Family in 2013.

LCUSA will participate in the gatherings to educate and strengthen our Vincentian Family work on Systemic Change.

LCUSA will continue its support of the Coalition of Catholic Organizations against Human Trafficking.

LCUSA will continue to support local and international associations in crisis and disasters whenever the need arises.

PROVIDING VINCENTIAN LEADERSHIP TO WOMEN ACTING TOGETHER AGAINST ALL FORMS OF POVERTY

Let us build a future together of service, charity and justice demonstrated by the loyalty and strength of LCUSA's members. Thank you for caring and sharing in our mission and goals. ‡



WALKing With A Purpose

Wanda Sidwell

On September 8, the Ladies of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul/Guardian Angel in St. Louis, Mo., held their third annual WALK. It was a sunny day and everyone was very enthusiastic. The WALK is intended to raise the visibility of the group's mission and to recruit new members.

This year the participants were asked to bring a pair of new or gently used men's tennis shoes as a donation. The

Left: St. Louis members walking to raise awareness of Ladies of Charity.

Right: Kathy Coco (left) recognizing Vida Bayer, the member who raised the most money from sponsorships.



association operates a clothing window serving the homeless and working poor in the community. Blankets, clothing, shoes and personal hygiene items are available at the window. Many of those living in homeless shelters or on the streets have to walk to their destinations and shoes can be an extremely important component of their day.

Participants competed to see who could bring in the most sponsor money. Vida Bayer, a food pantry volunteer and longtime member of the Ladies of

Charity, was the winner. She raised \$280 from friends and family. The totals are not in yet but another successful WALK earning between \$3500 and \$4000 is anticipated.

After the WALK there were games for the kids and music. Everyone enjoyed a bottle of water, a bagel, a piece of fruit or a cookie. All of the refreshments were donated by generous businesses and individuals in the area as St. Vincent's continues to sponsor it WALKS with a purpose. ‡

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 use the envelope enclosed in this newsletter to submit your own intention.

† MEMORIALS †

<i>In Memory of</i>	<i>Bequeathed by</i>
Jacqueline Burch	LOC, Lake Travis
Joseph R. Casarsa	Dr. Beth Candino
Beverly Castelletto	LOC, Lake Travis
Walt Conley	LOC, Lake Travis
Lucille Edwards	Mary Margaret Edwards
Rita Fino	Mary Beth O'Brien
Kyran Flannery	Mary Beth O'Brien
John Gilman	Gayle Johnson
	Mary Ann Morovitz
	Connie O'Brien
	Molly Siedlarczyk
	Joan Stanard
Freddie Gregg	LOC, Lake Travis
Todd Kazmierski	Gayle Johnson
	Mary Ann Morovitz
	Molly Siedlarczyk
	Joan Stanard
John Klopfer Sr.	Deborah Self
Hazel Mansell	Jeanne Mansell
Sr. Mary Rose McGeady	Mary Beth O'Brien
Fr. Romain Morales, CM	Fr. Perry Henry, CM
	LCUSA
Evelyn Murphy	Mary Beth O'Brien
Jean Platt	Mary Beth O'Brien
Sr. Mary Alice Roach	Mary Beth O'Brien
Barbara Rocco	Nicky Mercado

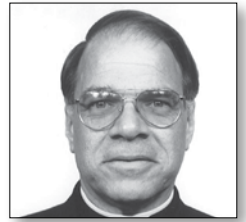
† IN HONOR OF †

Mrs. George Mankel Sr.	Rev. Msgr. Xavier Mankel, VG
Eleanor Warzoha	Mary Beth Legg
Eleanor Warzoha	Sally Johnson
Eleanor Warzoha	Suzanne Johnson
Eleanor Warzoha	Peggy Frame

The Loss of a Good Friend

Memorial: Rev. Romain G. Morales, CM
December 8, 1944 to September 20, 2012

Mary Ann Morovitz



The Reverend Romain G. Morales, CM, "Fr. Jerry," a former co-editor of the *Servicette*, entered into eternal life on Thursday, September 20. A few days prior, while celebrating the Sunday Eucharist in the chapel of St. Anthony's Hospital in St. Louis, Fr. Jerry suffered a massive stroke. His final act as a Vincentian priest was to receive and distribute Holy Communion. Prior to his service to LCUSA (2001-2004), Fr. Jerry was spiritual advisor and worked with the Ladies of Charity in the parishes of St. Catherine Laboure and St. Vincent de Paul in St. Louis.

Father Jerry was exposed to the good works of St. Vincent at an early age. To begin with, he was born on the feast of the Immaculate Conception, December 8, 1944. This feast day has special significance to those who follow the footsteps of St. Vincent. Jerry was taught by the Daughters of Charity while attending elementary school at St. Stephen's in New Orleans and continued his Vincentian education at high school in Cape Girardeau, Mo. He entered the Vincentian novitiate in 1962 at St. Mary's of the Barrens in Perryville, Mo., and was ordained a priest on June 2, 1973.

During his 39 years as a Vincentian priest, Fr. Jerry served in a variety of missions. He expanded his opportunity to serve by earning a Bachelor of Science in Nursing in 1993. All of his many other academic achievements and titles enabled Fr. Jerry to serve those in most need. He wore many hats. His eulogy stated that he was passionate for Jesus, friendship driven, and a servant of the poor.

People from many walks of life attended the funeral Mass for Fr. Jerry at St. Vincent's Church located in the neighborhood where ribbons of friendship and service are woven together. The Mass included a little New Orleans flair and the song "Just a Closer Walk With Thee" brought joy to the congregation.

Needless to say, Fr. Jerry touched and influenced the lives of many. He offered encouragement, friendship, counseling, ministry and love. Yes, his absence leaves a void in our lives but we feel blessed to have been able to walk the path of life with Fr. Jerry if only for a little while. †

SAVE THE DATE

The 13th Annual Assembly of the Ladies of Charity USA will take place Sept. 20-21, 2013, in San Jose, Calif. Optional tours of San Francisco and Monterey will be offered on Sept. 18-21. More information to follow in the *Servicette*.

Does Your Association Need Revitalizing?

Then Here Is A Plan!

Lucy Saunders, LCUSA President, and Sr. Frances Ryan, DC, Spiritual Moderator

The New Orleans Ladies of Charity under the leadership of Adrian Kappesser, president, has worked with Sister Fran Ryan, LCUSA Spiritual Moderator, on this five step plan. Adrian, working with board members Claire and Colleen, has targeted a direct service project with St. Joseph's Rebuild Center in downtown New Orleans. The center was activated after the Katrina disaster and is still in full operation today serving the needs of those less fortunate.

Plans are being made to invite current members to sit at the table and focus on recruiting new members. Suggestions under consideration are to hold a reception for new members, as well as to plan a spring retreat. Lucy Saunders, LCUSA president, had the privilege of visiting the ladies in October to discuss their hopes of revitalizing their association.

This process is not only for the New Orleans LOC but can be adapted to other local associations who are faced with a decreasing membership. Everyone's prayers are asked for the success of this process to revitalize New Orleans and other local associations. The plan is:

1. Targeting Projects for the Poor, Systemic Change and Direct Service Projects:

A project for the poor needs to be selected before recruitment of future Ladies of Charity and Jr. Ladies of Charity. For example, an opportunity to help the "Homeless in DePaul USA" has newly emerged at St. Joseph Parish, New Orleans, La., as a systemic change project. Needs of schools with Daughters of Charity present also can be identified.

2. Identify a Process to Meet Needs of the Poor:

A process is needed to evaluate requests from other projects with the schools that might benefit poorer children. A "Request Form for a Project" needs to be created and discussed. An annual fund-raising event should be planned.

3. Work for "Good Timing" in the Association:

How often should the Ladies of Charity meet? Would every month or every other month be best? Advertise with "reasonable expectations" of new members, for example:



Lucy Saunders visited the New Orleans LOC. Pictured (from left) are Lucy Saunders, Sr. Kathleen Driscoll, Claire Pelleteri, Colleen Sullivan, Adrian Kappesser and Mary Leggio.

"Can you give two hours of direct service to the poor each week and also attend a bi-monthly meeting? Come join us!" A reception for new members should be planned to give further details and answer questions.

4. Vital Role of Spiritual Moderator/Spiritual Animator:

The role of the Daughters of Charity, Federation of Sisters of Charity, Lay Trained Lady of Charity (see LCUSA website <http://aic.ladiesofcharity.us/> for "Lay Formation of Spiritual Moderator") as a "Spiritual Moderator" is vital for spiritual animation. Assistance with spiritual resources to help them in their roles as spiritual animators for the Ladies of Charity can be obtained from LCUSA's National Service Center. There could be consideration of an annual day of retreat.

5. Recruitment in the Parishes, City or Towns for New Members (Newly Retired Women):

What would be the best process to reach, particularly, women who are newly retired and might give assistance for a few hours? The Handbook for Membership, with good recruitment materials, is available through LCUSA. 79 million persons in the baby boomer generation are retiring; women in this group would be great members for the local association if asked to help with specific projects for the poor and were invited to a reception to learn more. Junior Ladies of Charity Associations should be greatly encouraged. †

LCUSA PRESIDENT'S TRAVEL DIARY



Lucy Ann Saunders ~ President

Vincentian Charism Travels Well

Having the opportunity to continue my travels found me in St. Louis attending a Day of Recollection for Ladies of Charity planned by Sr. Carol Schumer, DC. This Archdiocesan Ladies of Charity Retreat was titled "Collaboration: Then and Now, St. Vincent and St. Louise; Ladies and Daughters." The Perryville LOC hosted this special day that concluded with Mass at the church of the Assumption, St. Mary's of the Barrens, National Shrine of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal. Together we discussed the various stages of relationships that Vincent and Louise experienced during their journey to serve those less fortunate, while posing the question "How does mission guide us along the path of collaboration?"

This trip also gave me the opportunity to visit with both Maureen in LCUSA's national office and members of the St. Vincent de Paul Society who have so graciously welcomed us into their facility. Remembering my first visit there as president in 2011, made this a memorable occasion. A special thanks to my hosts, Mary Ann and Steve Morovitz.

The following week found me in Buffalo, staying with the Daughters of Charity at Sisters Hospital and traveling with Kathleen Sieracki in up-state New York. We first visited with the Albany LOC at the DePaul and St. Louise House. The Schenectady LOC was also represented by Judy Kiernan (VP) and Carol Reid (Secretary). One interesting discussion involved a possible joint venture to distribute ashes at the airport chapel on Ash Wednesday. After the meeting, Kathy and I were welcomed by the Albany Daughters to spend the night where we had the chance to visit with both the active and retired Daughters. Thanks to Sr. Joanne Donovan, DC, for hosting us and LOC President Candice Stellato for coordinating the meeting with members and the Schenectady LOC.

Traveling back to Buffalo, we visited with the Utica Ladies of Charity at St. John's historic church. St. Marianne Cope, canonized on 10/21, was baptized and received her first communion in this parish church. After Mass we enjoyed lunch and helped make sandwiches for their parish outreach program. Thanks to President Joan Betzenhauser and newly appointed Spiritual Moderator Sr. Paula Mayer, DC, and all the ladies for a wonderful morning and afternoon.

A side trip took us to the shrine of the North American Martyrs, specifically to the shrine of St. Kateri Tekawitha, also canonized 10/21. As Kathy and I traveled, the thought came to both of us that we were traveling the Saints' Highway not

only today's saints but saints for all times beginning with Saint Vincent and now the Daughters and Sisters who are always there to take care of us in their special way. They are today's saints traveling beside us as we carry out our ministries as Ladies of Charity.

Reaching Buffalo, it was time to spend Saturday with other members of the Family in a special gathering, organized as Vincentian Family Day. St. Vincent de Paul Society President Sheila Gilbert and I as LCUSA President had the opportunity to speak about our organizations and the collaboration that is taking place in the family on Systemic Change. The day was very successful with over 100 family members present, ending with Mass co-celebrated by Fr. John Freund, CM, and Fr. John Gouldrick, CM. Sister Mary Grace Higgins, DC, and all the Daughters at Sisters Hospital were so gracious to accommodate Sheila and me for this special occasion. Thanks Sisters, it couldn't have been done without YOU.



Lucy Saunders addresses the Vincentian Family Day gathering in Buffalo

During my term as president, there was another area of the country that I hadn't visited and where LCUSA has two LOC associations working very hard to serve their communities. That would be Salt Lake City, Utah. Sr. Germaine Sarazin, DC, made my arrangements and I arrived on December 1. What a beautiful area!! The Bountiful and Salt Lake City Ladies made me feel right at home. I was privileged to witness and take part in two installations of new officers and members, meeting and traveling with both groups. Collaboration is definitely part of their vocabulary. Again thanks go to Sr. Germaine, Sr. Cecilia Van Zandt, DC, and Jane and Bob Kipley, who welcomed me as their guest. Stay tuned next quarter because there is more to say about Utah and a place named "Give Me a Chance" operated by Sr. Maria Nguyen, DC, in Ogden.

I extend my special thanks to all the officers and members for their hospitality and kindness shown to me as a Lady of Charity and LCUSA representative. How lucky I have been to meet so many of you along the way as LCUSA president!!

St. Jerome Catholic Church

Archdiocese of Washington

Hyattsville, Maryland

Celebrating 80 Years of Service

—Another Approach to Revitalization

Kendra Jochum



Founded in 1932, the St. Jerome's Ladies of Charity was one of the initial associations in the area and is proud to celebrate 80 years of service this year! 2012 has proved an

important year for the association even beyond this milestone. Within the past few years, the group had fallen nearly inactive and membership dwindled to only a few women.

Earlier this year Kendra Jochum joined St. Jerome's. With her interest in continuing to actively serve, she connected with Therese Mukoko, a long time parishioner and member of the Ladies of Charity. With the full support of St. Jerome's pastor, Fr. James Stack, and Beverly Motley and Gloria Rose (Archdiocese of Washington LOC), Kendra as president and Therese as vice president worked to revive the St. Jerome's Ladies of Charity and establish a new Junior Ladies of Charity.

Beginning in May with a 'Taste and See Information Meeting,' monthly meetings have continued. With an initial focus on publicity and membership, a presentation board was permanently set up in the vestibule to provide background and current information on the Ladies of Charity. Flyers were included as weekly bulletin inserts, a Facebook page and specific email address were established, and a business card was created with mission and contact information. Interested women heard the call of Vincentian spirit, and as of August there were fourteen new members pending induction. This momentum brought further blessings with the foundation of a Junior Ladies of Charity in July with ten members also pending induction! Increasing membership for both groups will be a continued focus.

The growth in membership has provided greater opportunities to extend service work within both the parish and the local community. The Ladies of Charity will continue to support two established parish ministries: the St. Jerome's Boutique group of women knitting and seaming goods and the St. Jerome's Café providing weekly meals for the areas homeless and poor. Other service committees include monthly material donation drives; helping the sick, elderly and needy with chores, errands, transportation, and companionship; arranging clothing exchanges and a clothes closet; hosting all parish feast day celebrations; coordinating parish social events with the Knights of Columbus; providing prayers, greeting cards

and organized spiritual support for parishioners; supporting victims of domestic violence ; providing meals to individuals and families in difficulty; supporting St. Ann's maternity home and a local pregnancy center; supporting local nursing homes; providing literacy support and tutoring to children and adults; supporting the Catholic Student Center at a local university; supporting prison outreach ministry; and connecting with the Nigerian community at St. Jerome's to enjoy cross-



cultural relationships and identify a sister parish community. Committee chairs and members have been identified and activities are beginning. All are actively engaged as the new foundation of the St. Jerome's Ladies of Charity.

In celebrating their 80th year, St. Jerome's Ladies of Charity aim to continue the standard set in earlier decades and commit "to serve rather be served in humility, simplicity, and charity."

Please "like" their Facebook® page at:

www.facebook.com/StJeromesLadiesofCharity

contact them via email: StJeromesLOC@gmail.com

and visit St. Jerome's Parish at: www.stjeromes.org and LOC Archdiocese of Washington at: www.ladiesofcharityadw.org. †

Congratulations
St. Jerome
Junior Ladies of
Charity—
2012 T-Shirt
Design Contest
Winner!





AIC USA

<http://aic.ladiesofcharity.us>

“To serve rather than to be served”

Part II: Louise de Marillac, Collaborator with Vincent de Paul

Carol Schumer, D.C.



During her first 34 years, Louise de Marillac experienced many trials and difficulties. God was clearly preparing her for the second half of her life.

In 1625, around the time of her husband's death, Louise and Vincent de Paul met. This significant encounter changed their lives. Vincent quickly saw Louise's intelligence and Louise valued Vincent's commitment to action. During the next 35 years, Vincent and Louise communicated often through letters and personal meetings, with Vincent guiding Louise and Louise urging Vincent forward. Ultimately, they became a team for service to the poor.

Their ministry together began in earnest in 1629 when Vincent invited Louise to visit the Confraternities of Charity, founded in 1617 as the forerunner of the Ladies of Charity. Advised by him to “Go ... in the name of Our Lord,”¹ she

traveled, at her own expense, in a public coach, with a female companion.

While with the women, Louise listened, praised, reproved, encouraged and modeled compassionate service.² In spite of her ill health, during the next four years, Louise met with all the Charities in the environs of Paris³ and began establishing organizations within the capitol. Louise found great success and satisfaction in these endeavors.

In seventeenth century France, many underprivileged people were victims of non-existent health care and inadequate hospital conditions. The Ladies provided help and monetary resources, but this was insufficient. For, though they had funds to offer, they did not have the time or disposition to live a life of service and insertion among persons living in poverty. Louise sought additional assistance from young country women who had the energy and the aptitude to deal with people weighed down by destitution and suffering. This was the foundation of the Daughters of Charity who have collaborated and assisted the Ladies of Charity from the beginning.

At times, Vincent is called the heart of the Ladies and the Daughters, while Louise is the head. This isn't quite true for Louise had a big heart also. The remark gives tribute to Louise's strong intellect, organizational skills and her ability to get things

accomplished. However, along with activity, she also lived in love. Nearing her death, she wrote: “Take good care of the service of the poor. Above all, live together in great union and cordiality, loving one another in imitation of the union and life of Our Lord.”⁴

After increasingly ailing health, Louise died on March 15, 1660, six months before the death of her collaborator and friend, Vincent de Paul. She was 69 years of age and had left her legacy!

Canonized in 1934, St. Louise was named patroness of those with disappointing children, those who've lost parents, people rejected by religious orders, sick persons and social workers. As wife, mother, teacher, nurse, counselor, mentor, religious foundress, she stands as a model for all women.

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

How does Louise's example impact my service?

✠ With whom am I called to collaborate?

✠ How?



¹ Coste, Pierre, Vincent de Paul Correspondence, Volume 1, Letter #39, May 6, 1629, pages 64–65

² Dirvin, Joseph, Louise de Marillac, 1970, pages 83–84

³ Calvet, Jean, Louise de Marillac, 1958, page 57

⁴ Spiritual Writings of Louise de Marillac, page 835