

LADIES OF CHARITY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA SERVICETTE

"To serve rather than to be served"



AIC USA
VOL. 54, Nº 1
April 2014

"Getting Ahead" Graduates Break Important Ground in Cohoes, N.Y.

Kathy Kavanaugh

A lot of women are broken, sad, lost and we don't have to be. I have found a new way to live." One of the graduates of "Getting Ahead in a Just Gettin' by World," ("Getting Ahead") is feeling much more confident following her coursework and the support system that developed among her fellow graduates. On Dec. 17, community leaders and families gathered in the Cohoes Housing Authority Community Room to celebrate six women who have taken the first step in changing their lives and their community. Ladies of Charity of the Albany Diocese has been involved from the beginning when community leaders gathered three years ago to address the generational poverty plaguing this once vibrant city. The planning group is now known as the "Bridges Out of Poverty Committee" or "Bridges." As a Lady of Charity, I am privileged to serve with this selfless and forward thinking group of people.

Concurrently, Albany LOC started Mary's Corner, an outreach site to provide basic necessities to families with young children. This was and continues to be an avenue to help identify women who would be good candidates for the

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JUST CARE! VINCENTIAN WOMEN IN ACTION

LCUSA 2014 National Assembly, September 12-13, Milwaukee

LCUSA is proud to announce that Marilyn Martone, a Lady of Charity in the St. John's University Association, will deliver the keynote address at the 2014 National Assembly, "Just Care! Vincentian Women in Action."

Marilyn is a retired associate professor of moral theology at St. John's, with a specialty in health-care ethics. She is also the author of *Over the Waterfall*, the story of her daughter Michelle who was hit by a car sixteen years ago, was unconscious for eight months and has since lived with the consequences of a traumatic brain injury. Marilyn's expertise on the issues surrounding caregiving is both professional and personal. She has written the following essay as an introduction to some of the topics she will discuss.

The Challenge of Caregiving

Beginning with the story of creation and continuing throughout the Bible we read how we have been called to care for each other and for all created things. Women have been especially adept at doing this. In practically every culture of the world it is women who are the primary caregivers. In most cases it is women who care for the children, the elderly, those with disabilities, even the plants and animals. Caregiving is one of the primary defining features of what it means to be human.

Yet because of the way that caregiving labor has been organized, carrying this responsibility can also lead to one's social isolation, economic disadvantage and loss of voice. Caregiving work is labor intensive and crucial for one's flourishing, but is often not even considered work because it takes place in the private realm. Frequently it has no economic value and is not part of the Gross Domestic Product until there is no one to do this work for free and one must hire caregiving services. Those who do this labor are usually the lowest paid in a society.

Although women in many parts of the world have made great strides toward equality, it is often their need to care for others that keeps them from advancing further. Men who do caregiving also have this problem because society is organized for the unencumbered adult who has few responsibilities to others.



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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

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MISSION STATEMENT

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

VISION STATEMENT

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

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP

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



SERVICETTE NEWS DEADLINE

The deadline to submit articles and photos for the Spring issue of the *SERVICETTE*:
May 1, 2014

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

Please contact us for info.



Lessons from Pope Francis

Bishop David A. Zubik
Episcopal Chairman

One of my daily routines is to read the Holy Father's homilies, available on "The Vatican Today" (www.news.va). I take to heart the lessons Pope Francis teaches as I read his thoughts.

In one homily, the Holy Father warned about how we must overcome the temptation to be "Christians without Jesus." He was speaking about how central Jesus must be in the life of every Christian. "Jesus," he said, "is the center. Jesus is the Lord." He warned against those who, while they put their faith in the commandments, do not know why and do not understand that "I do this because the Lord wants me to do this."

- ▶ Living the faith flows from knowing Jesus and believing in Jesus. We must keep Jesus first, understand and believe that Jesus is the center of our lives. Then the commandments and all they entail become real, not just statements on a poster or words in the Bible.
- ▶ Where we go wrong is when we define ourselves as Christians by anything but Jesus. We don't believe in Jesus because of what we believe. We believe what we believe because we believe in Jesus. We are Christians because we are centered in Jesus, not in issues.
- ▶ Pope Francis is NOT saying that we should not speak about the issues of abortion or gay marriage or artificial contraception. He IS saying that the Church and its teachings are much more important than just those three issues. We are also Church in how we treat the poor, the immigrant, the aged and the sick. We are Church in how we treat our neighbor, how we

treat the stranger, how we treat those who are different from us.

The mercy of Jesus in your life and mine means that we have the potential to be saints. There is not a person in the world who is too far gone, too far anything, for that message. We must be able to start where everything starts—with the person of Jesus himself. If we start instead by hurling lightning bolts rather than offering a welcoming embrace, condemning people rather than inviting people, getting boxed into a narrow set of issues rather than espousing the limitless mercy of God, we will get nowhere fast.

One of my favorite quotes, "Here comes everybody!" is often attributed to the Irish writer James Joyce when he was asked how he defined the Church. That is who we are and who we have always been. We are the Church of everybody. Many may argue the point that the church is where we come together as family. And that's true. But it is especially the place where we come together as family to connect with God in prayer.

- ▶ The Church of everybody, centered in Jesus, is female and male, any race, any color, gay or straight, sober or addict—the whole human condition in all its mystery and diversity. We are called to be the face of Jesus to others, so that others may find the face of Jesus in us.
- ▶ Pope Francis sees himself as a pastor and speaks as a pastor. The more you and I get to know him, the more we find him to be a pastor. As our pastor, and as our pope, he is teaching us not to fall into the temptation of being Christians without Jesus. Let's heed well the voice of the Shepherd. Let's learn well the heart of the Savior. ✦

Dear Readers,

We apologize for the delay in this issue of our publication. Our designer, Elena Miranda, has been in treatment for a serious illness but still found time to be of service to us. Please join us in praying for Elena's full recovery. Her remarkable spirit and love reflect the true virtues of each and every Lady of Charity.

May St. Vincent, St. Louise and St. Elizabeth Ann continue to watch over Elena!

Gayle Johnson



President's Message

Gayle Johnson
LCUSA President

Let us beg God to enkindle in our hearts a desire to serve him... (SV XI, 75)

This powerful teaching from St. Vincent served as the motivation for founding the Confraternity of Charities nearly 400 years ago. His admonition was based on faith in God and experience in Chatillon-les-Dombes, the village where he first encountered generational poverty.

St. Vincent was not the first saint to advocate serving the poor but his experience pastoring in that rural parish taught him a life-long lesson. Good intentions and helpful outreach to his villagers too often met immediate needs and were short lived. The poor remained desperately poor. From this experience he envisioned forming an organization that would help the poor change their economic

circumstances for the long term. The villagers transformed his life and, in turn, he envisioned the poor could transform the lives of those who helped them. He saw the face of Jesus in each individual and it was his intention that the members of the Confraternity do the same. The long term conversion of the poor to economic stability was also meant to convert their providers to a radical perception where the poor were treated as masters to learn from, not just given to. In this manner, we members of the Ladies of Charity are challenged to live these principles which have endured 400 years.

St. Vincent taught his members to practice the virtues of simplicity, humility and charity in order to be effective in their ministry. Humility and charity have been addressed in my previous issues. **Simplicity** is the virtue that calls for us to choose the right way of doing things, to be straightforward and honest without needless reservations or manipulations. Our sole focus is on God's intention, not human direction. Vincent also talked about and lived the virtues of **zeal** and **perseverance** which are necessary to maintain the burning love that enabled him and us to do God's

work, a task which is sometimes unpleasant and challenging but can nourish our souls. He practiced **meekness**, the virtue that fosters warmth, approachability and deep respect and is not mealy mouthed as often portrayed today. His prayer was "Grant me a kindly and benign spirit..." a prayer we might say as committed members of the Confraternity. Finally, our founder and mentor Vincent modeled **mortification** whose root meaning is sacrifice, that is, to put others before one's self.

Formation and development of these virtues is an essential part of the life of a Lady of Charity. Service to the poor cannot exist without spiritual reflection and renewal based on the virtues St. Vincent, St. Louise de Marillac, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton and other Vincentian saints practiced in their service to the poor. Our goal is a renewal of the spirituality with which we were founded.

Join us in spiritual reflection at our website at www.ladiesofcharity.us and sign up for our email alerts. Click on the green "Subscribe" button near the top of the home page. Among the notices you will receive are our Advent and Lenten reflections. **(Virtues courtesy of famvin.org)* ✧

VINCENTIAN FAMILY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

By **John Freund, CM** on November 20, 2013 in **Justice and Peace**

Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill Celebrate Collaboration of National Vincentian Family on Social Justice Issues

Social justice representatives from fifteen branches of the Vincentian Family in North America are collaborating on issues of peace, justice and integrity of creation. The collaboration brings together representatives from ten Sisters of Charity congregations in North America as well as the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, the Congregation of the Mission (East and West), the Ladies of Charity USA and the Vincentian lay missionaries.

Through dialogue about issues as well as sharing of resources and project designs, the group aims to strengthen the voice of the individual organizations, all of whom have a particular care for those living in poverty and on the margins of society. The representatives are collaborating on issues such as immigration reform and climate change.

Monthly conversations are increasing awareness of efforts made by others in the Vincentian Family in the areas of advocacy and direct service. These conversations aid in building consensus and mobilizing larger numbers of advocates committed to peace, justice and the integrity of creation

Participating in this new collaboration are both lay and religious groups committed to work with and on behalf of people living in poverty in the spirit of Saints Vincent de Paul, Louise de Marillac, Elizabeth Seton and others in this tradition. Participants include the Executive Director and the NGO of the Sisters of Charity Federation as well as representatives from the Ladies of Charity USA, the Sisters of Charity of New York, Saint Elizabeth, Cincinnati, Halifax, Nazareth, Leavenworth and Seton Hill, the Daughters of Charity of the West and the St. Louise Province, the Sisters of Charity of Our Lady of Mercy, the Congregation of the Mission (Eastern and Western Provinces), the Vincentian lay missionaries and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, National Council of the United States. ✧

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ADVOCACY CONNECTIONS

10th Anniversary: Coalition of Catholic Organizations Against Human Trafficking (CCOAH)

In November, Past President Lucy Saunders represented LCUSA at the CCOAHT meeting which coincided with the beginning of the annual Bishops Conference being held in Baltimore, and celebrated the 10th year of this coalition. CCOAHT is a subcommittee of Migration and Refugee Services (MRS) of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). Staff of MRS were included as observers at the Pontifical Academies of Sciences and of the Social Sciences trafficking workshop held in Rome.

Practical proposals recommended by MRS members to the Pontifical Academies for reducing human trafficking and making life better for survivors of trafficking include: educate and empower recent immigrants and refugees in destination countries; educate immigration and border enforcement officials about identifying and screening victims of trafficking; recognize and address the connection, in law and policy, between trafficking and the lack of safe and regular migration opportunities; support the right to family unity for victims; educate the Catholic faithful and others about human trafficking; build the capacity of existing social service providers to incorporate the care of survivors into their programs; and promote efforts internationally to ensure all nations adopt laws and practices which prevent and eliminate human trafficking.

In addition to LCUSA, CCOAHT membership includes several orders of nuns who are and have been very active in the fight against human trafficking, as well as other well-known Catholic organizations such as Catholic Relief Services and

Catholic Charities USA. November's meeting was held to establish goals and sub-activities that would focus on a specific area of human trafficking. **Consumerism** was selected as an overall goal with education and legislation as sub-activities. Targeted audiences to be approached and invited to engage with CCOAHT members in the practice of ethical consumerism are legislators; networks; policy makers; consumer reporting agencies and the media, among others. Everyone is asked to look beneath the surface to recognize child victims of human trafficking. Being aware of the clues and asking the right questions may uncover children who are being exploited for forced labor including domestic servitude, sweatshop factory work and migrant farming. If you suspect a child is a victim of human trafficking, call the National Human Trafficking Resource Center at 1.888.3737.888.

Bishop Eusebio L. Elizondo, MSpS, Auxiliary Bishop of Seattle, is the chair of the USCCB's Committee on Migration. He spoke to CCOAHT members and congratulated them on their personal involvement in fighting human trafficking. Bishop Elizondo was born in Mexico and has a great interest in the plight of those facing discrimination and abuse because of the cruelties and injustices in today's society. The CCOAHT welcomed Bishop Elizondo and the opportunity to promote ethical consumerism in order to identify and combat the immorality of retailers profiting from the work of minors.

With the support of the USCCB, the coalition established Feb. 8, the feast day of St. Josephine Bakhita, who was kidnapped as a child and sold into slavery in Sudan and Italy, as an annual day of prayer for survivors and victims of human trafficking. Once St. Bakhita was freed, she dedicated her life to sharing her testament of deliverance from slavery and comforting the poor and suffering (CCOAH Press Release). The Ladies of Charity USA will join in prayer for the victims of trafficking and will continue education and advocacy efforts to end this modern day slavery. ♦

Hager Grants At Work in the Archdiocese of Washington, D.C.

Toni Gaines

The District of Columbia Ladies of Charity Parish Units received a \$1000 Kathleen Hager Grant in 2013. Cheryl Hamlin-Williams attended the national assembly as their delegate and received the recognition from Middle Atlantic Regional Vice President, Rita L. Robinson. The funds are earmarked to support the District of Columbia's service project which provides shoes throughout the year to children aged 6-17. As a result of the grant, their "Shoes 4 Kids" project enabled 58 families to purchase shoes.

The Ladies of Charity of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church, Washington, D.C, received a 2013 Kathleen Hager Grant to enhance its newly expanded food pantry. Assistance was also provided to the pantry by Our Lady of Victory Parish and Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Washington's Parish

Partners Program. The Parish Partners program is led by Deacon James Nalls who was a tremendous help to OLPH. The combined funding helped purchase new commercial shelving, freezers, tables

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Volunteers at OLPH food pantry.



Collaborating Within the Vincentian Family: A Visit to St. John's University

“Any institution calling itself ‘Vincentian’ must extend Vincent’s dream to its own time and place. As a university, St. John’s possesses the tools of knowledge and research, and of youth and energy. These are powerful tools that can make a difference in the lives of poor people.” (*St. Vincent de Paul: In His Own Words*, Vincentian Center publication)

Three of the five goals in LCUSA’s new strategic plan (increasing communication and visibility; increasing membership; and growing funding) require outreach to new audiences and a clear articulation of the mission and identity of the organization. Recognizing this need, President-Elect Mary Ann Dantuono, a staff member at St. John’s University in Jamaica, N.Y., discussed the matter with fellow Lady of Charity Victoria Shoaf, Dean of the Peter J. Tobin College of Business at the university. The discussion led to Professor Joan Ball and her marketing students accepting LCUSA as a client, with the goal of developing a marketing plan to increase membership, with particular emphasis on making LCUSA attractive to 18-30 year old women. President Gayle Johnson formed an Ad Hoc Committee (Kathy Kavanaugh, Elena Miranda, and Kathleen Sieracki) to assist herself and Mary Ann in working with the students.

The project kicked off on Sept. 26 with Mary Ann present at a class session

and Gayle and Kathleen participating long-distance. The students were oriented to LCUSA and they subsequently formed a plan to approach the assignment. On Monday, Dec. 9, Gayle, Mary Ann, Kathy and Kathleen attended the students’ presentation of their recommendations intended to help LCUSA achieve national “brand” recognition, reenergize the organization by doubling membership (specific increase in the 18-30 year age range) and increase retention of members. Several innovative ideas included the use of interns; building bridges to universities and businesses; improving linkages to Junior Ladies of Charity; connecting with people who have benefited and encouraging them to become members; organizing a national annual event (Prom Fashion Show suggested); and better use of the website and social media.

LCUSA will combine these suggestions with those made by members at the national assembly in September to direct meaningful efforts in increasing support for the work and mission of the Ladies of Charity.

Following the class, Dr. Ball met with the committee members and also Marilyn Martone and Natalie Boone, both of St. John’s LOC, to discuss next steps. Before the marketing plan can be implemented, LCUSA must define the story it wants to communicate and determine the appropriate audience.

Above: LCUSA board members and the marketing class at St. John’s University following the students’ presentation on ways to increase membership.

A survey was circulated to board members and local association presidents to help develop the story. Dr. Ball offered to analyze the survey responses and to continue working, pro bono, with LCUSA.

This exciting morning was surrounded by other opportunities to learn about St. John’s. On Sunday, Gayle, Mary Ann and Kathleen attended Mass at St. Thomas More Church on the campus and met Sr. Margaret John Kelly, DC, Spiritual Moderator, and Fr. Michael Whalen, CM, Spiritual Advisor for the St. John’s LOC. The circular narthex of the church features a mosaic history of the Vincentian Family. A brunch at Mary Ann’s home with members of the St. John’s association followed Mass, and a visit to the Christmas tree at Rockefeller Center completed the day Tuesday was highlighted by a visit to St. John’s Prep School where several young women are preparing to become Junior Ladies of Charity. Jasmine Iniguez commented on the process, “It’s always good to pray together. It makes everyone peaceful.”

All the visitors left inspired and excited by the energy surrounding the St. John’s University community. ✦

Uganda Project Highlights Day of Reflection

Peggy Keene



An October Day of Reflection sponsored by the Ladies at St. Louise de Marillac Parish in the Pittsburgh Diocese began with encouraging spiritual insights into Catholic worry and guilt by Fr. Eugene Lauer. The program continued with a special treat, a presentation by Katie Wozniak, a senior biochemistry student at Duquesne University. Katie shared her experience with a project for her Honors Fellowship related to a Ladies of Charity group in Kampala, Uganda.

The mission of this group is to uplift and empower girls and women with a

vision of a healthy society where men and women have the moral dignity, skills and willpower to manage their health and environment for the betterment of themselves and future generations. The Ugandan project has created awareness of the importance of a clean environment in the Nsooba area and has supported children whose parents have HIV/AIDS. The group members have been trained in entrepreneurship and small scale business management, designing jewelry and other handicrafts for sale in the larger market.

Katie began selling the items at



Above: Katie Wozniak describes the work of the women of Uganda.

Duquesne and other small venues and had a display of the items available on the Day of Reflection. The Pittsburgh Ladies' response was tremendous – Katie sold practically all of the merchandise – resulting in over \$600 in sales and \$200 in donations. 100% of those proceeds will go back to the Ugandan ladies to pay the women fairly for their work, to build their organization in numbers and to fund new project ideas. Katie stated that in a country where the average annual income is approximately \$500 per person, these profits are going to benefit the women's project in great ways. If anyone is interested in purchasing items or selling them at your parish, please contact Katie Wozniak at wozniakk@duq.edu ✦

Albany Ladies of Charity Opens Second Mary's Corner Location

We must redouble our efforts and our ordinary duties on certain occasions when the service of God requires it; then God will not fail to increase also our strength and our courage.

St. Vincent de Paul

The Albany Ladies of Charity is pleased to announce the opening of the second "Mary's Corner" ministry at the Sr. Maureen Joyce Center in Albany. Mary's Corner serves families with children ages birth through three years of age. Families are guaranteed to receive the following items once each month: a five day supply of diapers; a five day supply of formula/baby food/cereal; a bottle of baby wash; a tube of diaper cream; a package of baby wipes; three outfits of clothing and three books. In addition, families may choose a seasonal coat; shoes/boots; baby blanket; toys; stuffed animals; baby equipment and/or a stroller. The guaranteed items and additional items are valued at \$75 to \$100 per child per month. This is a huge resource

for families who live on fixed incomes and for the working poor. Mary's Corner is organized like a store, with clothes arranged in outfits on hangers, and items attractively displayed. Families are pleased and grateful to be able to come to shop for nice things for their children in a warm and welcoming atmosphere staffed by caring volunteers. One young mother said "I am very thankful for this program. It is so helpful for me as a single parent with a



Ellen Boyer (L) and Ellen Bernier are co-chairs of the two Mary's Corner locations.

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Spirits Soar in Utah—*Witnessing Collaboration and Systemic Change*

Theresa Ward

With the majestic snow-covered Wasatch and Oquirrh mountain ranges gracing the Salt Lake City skyline through the airplane window, my journey to visit our Vincentian family in Utah unfolded. Come along to learn some history of their roots in Utah and to share in their rich ministries!

The Center of Hope Pantry and the Founding of the Utah Associations Central to both associations is the “Center of Hope” Pantry. The genesis of the pantry was in the home driveway of Sr. Charlotte Marie Clark, DC, at St. Olaf’s in Bountiful about eight years ago. The Bountiful Association was formed to support this ministry which grew rapidly and soon needed a larger location.

Spearheading recruitment of new Ladies led Sr. Charlotte Marie to our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Salt Lake City, about 30 minutes away. Fifteen ladies readily accepted the invitation to join the Bountiful Association. As more women were recruited from Salt Lake City the need to hold their monthly meetings geographically closer was identified, and the Salt Lake City Association was formed.

Today, the pantry is located in North Salt Lake City, about midway between the two associations. Both groups collaborate with the Utah Food Bank and other food resources in the community to assure that monthly deliveries are fulfilled.

“The St. Vincent de Paul Society does not exist here in Utah,” says Sr. Germaine Sarrazin, DC, Spiritual Moderator. “We’re it!”

More Good Works “These Ladies work well together” says Salt Lake City President Jackie Harover. At Our Lady of Lourdes Parish the Ladies coordinate all of the parish receptions and bereavement gatherings in addition to holding annual fund-raisers, including the Christmas Bazaar and a March Soda Bread sale.

Also parish-based (St. Olaf’s), the Bountiful Ladies reach out in their community through compassionate care visits to nursing homes and the incarcerated. They provide financial assistance to a variety of agencies, both locally and abroad through annual fund-raising including a July barbecue, garage sales, raffles and a holiday boutique.

The Christmas Project What better way to honor the Christ Child at Christmas than by bringing Vincentian joy,

Above: Utah Ladies of Charity and family members gather to wrap Christmas gifts.

hope and care to those he loves. Keeping with tradition, both the Bountiful and Salt Lake City Ladies of Charity Associations moved into “high gear” during this season of giving to collaborate and assist 110 families (300 children total), bringing holiday food boxes and other gifts.

Many weeks of advance preparation culminated in gatherings for gift wrapping and packing the holiday food boxes in time for delivery the second week of December. The Bountiful group was awarded a Hager Grant earlier this year to support their work in the Christmas project. President Sandy Stark reported their decision to supplement the food deliveries with an additional food gift card.

Our Vincentian Mentors in Action The Daughters of Charity have had a presence in Utah since the 1920s. A recent mission, “Give Me a Chance Inc.” (GMAC), was founded in Ogden in April 2010 by Sr. Maria Nguyen to help women of low-income attain marketable skills. The GMAC has increased its programming since it was introduced to *Servicette* readers in the Winter 2013 issue.

In February 2013 GMAC relocated to a new building which has allowed for expanded services. In addition to sewing and alterations classes, programs such as computer literacy, family enrichment/relationships, nutrition and holistic living are offered. Family counseling and monthly workshops are now available. In October 2013 an after-school tutoring program began for children grades 1-6.

GMAC also operates the De Marillac Boutique in Ogden. Following remodeling earlier this year, the boutique now provides full-service formal attire ranging from baptismal to wedding wear and includes the De Marillac label! Three GMAC trainees are on-site to offer alterations.

My heartfelt thanks to the Bountiful and Salt Lake City Associations, the Daughters of Charity, GMAC and the De Marillac Boutique for extending hospitality to me during my visit: a most memorable Christmas gift! ♦

Getting Ahead

Cont'd from p. 1

Getting Ahead class. Ladies of Charity have participated in the first Bridges Out of Poverty training and co-facilitated Getting Ahead classes. They also helped with childcare while a mother was in class, and gave much needed financial support, including a recent \$2000 donation. One member is a mentor with several others considering the training necessary to assume that role.

Getting Ahead, a curriculum for those living in poverty, is comprised of a maximum of 16 weekly classes based on the initiatives of the well-regarded *Bridges Out of Poverty: Strategies for Professionals and Communities* by Ruby K. Payne, PhD and Philip E. DeVol and Terie Dreussi Smith, 2006. *Bridges Out of Poverty* identifies accurate mental models, or cultures, of poverty, middle class

and wealth so that communities can develop new program designs and personal relationships which may offer an effective route to systemic change both in the lives of the people and in the community. Communities using the Bridges concepts will typically want to engage people (“investigators”) living in poverty by offering Getting Ahead. Key to both Bridges and Getting Ahead is the involvement of those living in poverty as they gather at the planning tables, provide an assessment of their community, and identify both barriers to transition and solutions. Through Bridges, facilitators come to understand the culture of poverty; through Getting Ahead, persons living in poverty come to understand the culture of the middle class and can then begin to move toward stabilizing their homes and lives, acquiring continued education, and/or finding employment that will be sustaining. Following graduation, mentors are found who can assist the investigators as they write their “future story.” Another unique feature of Getting Ahead is that the investigator is completely responsible for setting his/her own agenda for moving from



Getting Ahead Graduates with the class facilitators: Kathy Kavanaugh (right) and Brittney Hunt next to her.

poverty; the mentor merely assists when asked and never does for the investigator what he/she is capable of doing.

At this point in Cohoes there are six remarkable women who have really appreciated Getting Ahead. The most common response was that the women felt they had found an incredible support and networking community and that they “had each other’s back” and could always go to another in the group to receive help to work on problems. Their loyalty to each other and to their families and their courage are some of their finest strengths and with God’s graces will surely serve their families and communities, and primarily themselves, with respect and dignity. It is an honor to know them and the community of Cohoes is poised to support them in their future stories!

Congratulations to the Albany Ladies for being among the first associations within LCUSA to become part of a Bridges Out of Poverty effort. ♦

Just Care!

Cont'd from p. 1

There is a strong global dimension to caregiving labor as well, for in many cases women from developed countries have been able to advance in their careers by hiring women from developing countries to be their nannies, their housekeepers, their nursing aides. The latter group of women, however, need to leave their own families to care for the families of others.

*All association presidents have received a picture tour of Milwaukee on DVD. For more information, visit www.locmilwaukee.com ♦

D.C. Hager Grants

Cont'd from p. 4

and chairs for clients, transport equipment and signs. The parish plans to refurbish the handicap ramp when weather permits.

The food pantry serves approximately 280 people weekly during two hours every Thursday. Emergency food bags are kept on hand in the rectory if food assistance is requested outside the pantry hours of operation. The bags of food should serve a family of four for at least 3 days. Due to the high demand for food assistance, clients may utilize the food pantry only once a month.

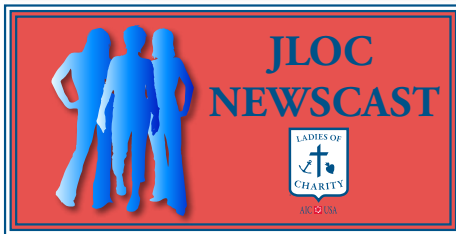
LOC is very grateful to the regular volunteer staff of members and other parishioners who work at the pantry every week; to their pastor, Father Thomas Frank, SSJ, who provided the space to expand the pantry; to LCUSA; and to the many organizations of the parish who provided financial support for this ongoing operation. May God bless them all for their dedicated service in helping those less fortunate. ♦

LCUSA ELECTIONS

2014 is an election year for the officers and board of directors for LCUSA. If you are interested in being a candidate or would like to recommend someone else, please contact Marilyn Martone, chair of the Nomination Committee, at:

mamartone@aol.com

New board members with new ideas and insights are always welcome.



The more you give to Our Lord, the more blessings you will receive. His yoke is sweet to [the one] who embraces it willingly.

St. Vincent de Paul

Albany Association Welcomes New Junior Ladies of Charity

Candice Stellato, President

On a lovely sunny Sunday, December 8, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, 18 young women from the Academy of the Holy Names were inducted as Junior Ladies of Charity. The liturgy and induction were held in the beautiful school chapel and also included the annual renewal of vows of the Sisters of the Holy Names and associates.

These new members join a vibrant and growing association of Juniors at the Academy. The young women have been very active, raising money for victims of the typhoon in the Philippines, holding fundraisers to build a well in a village in Africa, and volunteering at the Albany Regional Food Bank. They are also active in helping with the Ladies of Charity ministry at Mary's Corner, knitting hats and mittens, sorting clothes and putting together outfits for the "store." The Juniors truly exemplify and witness the charism of St. Vincent and St. Louise, as well as Sr. Marie Rose Durocher, founder of the Sisters of the Holy Names.

Albany LOC is very grateful to Judith Ferrara Wesley, a teacher at the Academy and also the moderator of the Junior Ladies. She has energized and supported these young women and also has been a liaison with the Albany association. The two groups enjoy close ties and work together in service to the poor.

Lady of Charity Beth DeAngelis will be exploring the formation of another association of Juniors which would be composed of young women who attend public school. The Albany association is delighted to support these efforts to bring more girls and teens into service and ministry together. ✦

St. Margaret of Scotland, Seat Pleasant, Md.

Jasmine Stokes, President

A Junior Lady of Charity (JLOC) knows it is better to serve than to be served. As a two term president, I have been an active member in the St. Margaret of Scotland association for over five years and have had the opportunity to participate in and lead over 50 proj-

ects. The 2013 year was very productive. Following is a brief summary of projects during the year.

- ▶ In February the JLOC gathered to make Valentine's Day gift bags for children. Bags included stuffed animals, toys and hand crafted cards.
- ▶ During the Easter season members prepared baskets for children which contained plastic eggs with candy inside, stuffed animals and small treats.
- ▶ For Fathers' Day we donated boxes of toiletries to the local men's shelter.
- ▶ In August the group enlisted the help of the parish to maximize a collection of school supplies so that the children of Shepherd's Cove Women and Children's Shelter and the teenagers of the Sasha Bruce Center for runaway teens were able to have a productive 2013-14 school year.
- ▶ For Thanksgiving the JLOC focused on one family. The young women cooked, baked and gathered all types of delicious traditional foods. Several members delivered food and hand-made cards to the family.
- ▶ 2013 closed with a Christmas bake sale to raise money for toys for homeless children. We aimed to raise more money than ever in the Juniors' 10-year history. With the support of the parish, the proceeds totaled \$365.50. The funds and other donations enabled the JLOC to provide gifts for over 70 children ages 1-12 and gift cards for all teenagers in the Sasha Bruce Center.

Continued — Junior Newscast p. 10



In 2014 two members of the association will graduate from high school and begin their college journey. As they embark on their future we know that they will carry on in the spirit of the Junior Ladies of Charity and continue to serve those less fortunate. ✧

Witness the Spirit

Diocese of Buffalo

On Nov. 15, the Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministry of the Diocese of Buffalo held its annual Witness the Spirit awards presentation. Julia Kajdas, a Junior Lady of Charity from St. Mary of the Assumption parish, was one of 17 young people to receive the Discipleship Award in recognition of her service to her parish and the community. Her efforts include volunteering at the Response to Love Center, St. Elizabeth's nursing home, and Ronald Mc Donald House, in addition to working on many projects at the church. Julia is treasurer of the Junior Ladies, and "goes about her work with compassion and humility, always giving of herself and always with a smile on her face." The St. Mary's group inducted 11 new members in November, bringing their total enrollment to 40.

At the same ceremony, Marian Snyder, one of the moderators of the Junior group, was among 14 adults rec-



From left: Marian Snyder, Sr. Mary Therese Chmura and Julia Kajdas at the awards ceremony.



Miraculous Medal Pilgrimage

Kitty Prager

On Nov. 11, the Junior Ladies of Charity of St. John's Preparatory School sponsored a trip for 45 classmates and several teachers to the Miraculous Medal Shrine established and maintained by the Congregation of the Mission (Vincentian priests) in the historic Germantown section of Philadelphia. The group set off early in the morning and were greeted by Fr. Miles Heinem, CM, and then attended a talk on St. Catherine Laboure and the Miraculous Medal. The students toured the shrine and prayed the rosary. Before returning to New York, they gathered in the cafeteria to dine on...of course, Philly cheese steak! The Juniors had a great day. ✧

Photo above: Students from St. John's Prep. visit the Miraculous Medal Shrine.

ognized as Companions on the Journey for being active and supporting their parish's youth ministry. Fr. Paul Steller, pastor, and Sr. Mary Therese Chmura, CSSF, director of faith formation, nominated Julia and Marian. They stated that through Marian's untiring spirit, humility, dedication and compassion she has made a difference in the lives of many

young people, influencing their character and values in a positive way. LCUSA congratulates Julia and Marian for earning the awards through their enthusiastic service to the Junior Ladies of Charity.

Sr. Mary Grace Higgins, DC, Spiritual Moderator of the Buffalo Ladies of Charity, was the guest speaker at the Juniors' January meeting. She spoke about the history of the Vincentian Family and distributed a written description. Each girl also received a Miraculous Medal and a bookmark. Former LCUSA President Marie Buckley and Mary Faulhaber, a past President of Buffalo LOC, attended the presentation.

LCUSA thanks St. Mary of the Assumption JLOC for sharing these events and recognitions. ✧



The Kathy Coco Memorial Walk

Mary Koenig

Kathy Coco of St. Vincent de Paul/Guardian Angel Parish in St. Louis was the founding chair of the annual Ladies of Charity Walk, Heart and Sole, Pounding the Pavement for the Poor ,

and led it for three years until her sudden death in 2012. The 2013 walk was dedicated to her memory.

The day of the walk dawned sunny and warm. The group met at a new

and improved location in Carondelet Park. More people walked than ever before. Kathy Coco's family showed up in force with hats proclaiming "Kathy's Crew." Many of her friends who have handled face painting and tattoos for children since the first walk arrived again to help and promised to be back next year. The music added a great touch and the hula-hoop contest was fun. Julie Parker, daughter of Lady of Charity Judy Sieckhaus, was workout leader.

Many felt the presence of the Holy Spirit and Kathy. A special moment occurred when a Sister of St. Joseph who came to the walk led the opening prayer. She had gone to high school with Kathy and wanted to help honor her. The event was a great tribute to Kathy and her legacy

Mark your calendar for the 2014 KATHY COCO MEMORIAL WALK on September 13. ♦

Introducing Toni Gaines, Lady of Charity and Caregiver

Toni Gaines has been a Lady of Charity since 1986. She is currently president of the Washington, D.C. association of seven parishes with approximately 130 members. She is also treasurer and webmaster for the Archdiocese of Washington Ladies of Charity and financial secretary of the group at her own parish, Our Lady of Perpetual Help. Toni has been a regular contributor to the *Servicette*, submitting articles and photos.

She has balanced these volunteer service roles with her responsibilities as sole caregiver for her mother, Aurelia Smith, age 85, who has been bedridden since 2004. An only child, Toni manages her mother's doctors' visits and medications. She has been trained in assisting her mother transfer from her bed to her wheelchair, and then to an automobile for transportation to appointments. Toni also provides all personal care and prepares meals. She is thankful that her



Toni Gaines, President of the Washington, D.C. Ladies of Charity association of seven parishes

mother is very alert and is able to feed herself and administer her own insulin.

Toni's professional career was spent at the United States Department of Education (formerly the Office of Education within the Department of Health, Education and Welfare). Her final position was financial analyst, responsible for assessing the viability and stability of colleges and universities in connection with the student aid program. She retired in 2004 after 35 years at the department, and her mother became bed-ridden the very next day.

The challenge of balancing and prioritizing caregiving responsibilities with professional and volunteer activities exemplified by Toni Gaines is surely very familiar to many Ladies of Charity. That reality will bring even more meaning to the LCUSA 2014 National Assembly, "Just Care! Vincentian Women in Action." ♦

The Season for Giving and Serving

Saratoga Vicariate, N.Y.

Patricia Reed,



Maureen Humiston and Ellen Fontaine-Kennedy at the Festival of Trees.

The Saratoga Vicariate Ladies of Charity prepared to welcome the birth of our Savior by giving of themselves.

The annual two-day **Christmas Giving Store** has been conducted every December for as long as current members can remember. Toys, books, crafts, gift cards, stocking stuffers and hand-made hats, mittens and gloves are provided free of charge to qualified children from infants to teenagers. At the Giving Store, members display the gifts by age groups and assist family members in making selections. Gift wrapping is available.

In preparation, new unwrapped donations are deposited in a large toy box is located at one local Catholic church. Gift donations are also solicited from members, the congregations of other parishes and community benefactors. Families are

referred through various local agencies: Saratoga Mentoring Center; Franklin Community Center; Domestic Violence of Saratoga and Mechanicville; and St Clements Outreach Program. 450 children were served.

The Saratoga Springs Festival of Trees is a fun-filled event and craft fair supporting the programs of Saratoga, Warren and Washington Counties Catholic Charities and filling the hearts of both children and adults with the spirit of Christmas. Trees and wreaths are decorated by local individuals and businesses for enjoyment and



Christmas Giving Store

purchase. Ladies of Charity members guide visitors amid hundreds of beautifully twinkling trees, wreaths, centerpieces and other holiday items on display. They also staff the gift store. Santa himself stops by from time to time for pictures.

A beautiful **Poinsettia Sale** following weekend Masses at local Catholic churches helps support the Christmas projects. The seasonal activities combine to form a joyful, humbling and exhausting way to welcome the Prince of Peace.

Learn more about the Saratoga Vicariate Ladies of Charity at www.LadiesOfCharitySaratoga.com. ♦

St. Anthony of Padua, No. Beach, Md.

Barbara Glover

St Anthony's Ladies of Charity and Junior Ladies of Charity were busy during the Christmas season with several projects that have been fixtures on their calendars for a number of years. They began with a Christmas Food Basket distribution: 151 families were given groceries, including a 12-pound turkey, to make a complete holiday meal. Many parish volunteers, from Daisy Scouts to very senior supporters, came together to help the LOC pack and carry food to clients' cars. Thanks to the hard work of the Junior LOC, food recipients could also visit the "Santa Shop" where they found gently used toys which had been donated, cleaned and ensured operational. Some adult gifts, including toiletries, clothing, accessories, etc., were also available.

The next day, LOC participated in the parish's Giving Tree project. Clients from the St. Anthony's Food Pantry, a twinning parish (St Bernardine's in Suitland) and Birthright of Prince Frederick registered to receive Christmas presents. Parish members were invited to purchase these gifts, wrap and return them for distribution on the Sunday before Christmas.



Supplies of food ready for volunteers at St. Anthony of Padua.



Workers complete packaging Christmas food gifts at St. Anthony of Padua.

LOC members were the “elves” organizing and distributing the gifts to pantry clients on that busy afternoon. In all nearly 300 folks received gifts through the Giving Tree effort.

In another project, the Junior LOC baked and distributed cookies to emergency services personnel in a project aptly named “Cookies for Cruisers.” The young women arranged cookies in holiday tins and distributed them to the local state police and sheriff’s offices and to the fire hall. It’s hard to say who enjoys this more—the givers or the receivers! This year the Junior Ladies added another fun holiday project – they decorated the Christmas tree in the home of St. Anthony LOC’s Spiritual Moderator, Sr. Ann Parker.

While the holiday projects required an extra burst of energy, members also maintained regular year-long projects: weekly Food Pantry distribution, emergency monetary assistance to the needy and disadvantaged in the community, knitting and crocheting shawls for the Prayer Shawl Ministry and cooking meals for Project Echo, a homeless shelter. ♦

Buffalo, N.Y.

Carolyn Kwiatkowski

In Buffalo, the 2013 holiday season began in February when paper shopping bags which would contain gifts for shut-in adults were decorated by a wide variety of youth groups. In July, volunteers with the United Way Day of



Joan Piecuch (L) and Susie Wright choose toys for children.

Caring helped pack the bags. Junior Ladies of Charity from St. Mary’s Parish participated in every stage of the project, decorating bags, assembling gifts and helping to pack. In total, 800 bags were prepared and distributed to clients of Catholic Charities of Western New York.

Ladies of Charity is a member of the Western New York Holiday Partnership, which also includes Salvation Army, the Response to Love Center, Boys and Girls Club and local churches and community centers. The Partnership is a collaboration, coordinating gift giving for children and teenagers in Erie and Niagara counties. During three weeks in November and December, 35 dedicated volunteers at Ladies of Charity packaged gifts for 2986 children. Christmas was a more joyous holiday thanks to the Diocese of Buffalo Ladies of Charity. ♦

Creative Fundraising in Los Angeles

Mary Beth Legg

Sally Johnson has been a Lady of Charity in Los Angeles for about 10 years. She is currently on the board of directors as a Regional Chairperson and Hospitality Chairperson. Five years ago she began LOC’s participation in the annual Shopping Extravaganza at the Citadel Outlets. Non-profit groups sell tickets for \$25 each and are able to retain \$20 of each admission. The purchaser receives lunch and the benefit of deeper discounts at 125 stores. Music, wine tasting, three free tickets for a raffle of \$80,000 worth of prizes and free baggage check are also included. Additional raffle tickets may be purchased, and organizations selling more than 100 admissions share in the proceeds.

In 2013, LOC earned \$4,000 which it disbursed among its five regions for aid to Catholic schools in need. Sally suggests associations research similar opportunities in their own areas. She is willing to share the benefits of her experience in organizing and promoting this fundraising opportunity.

The Los Angeles LOC invested 10 new members during an October Mass at St. Vincent Church (*photo right*). The new Ladies of Charity each received a rose, a cross and a booklet on the organization. Brunch at the Doheny Mansion on the grounds of Mount St. Mary’s College followed. LCUSA President Gayle Johnson attended the event.



Sally Johnson



Los Angeles LOC invested 10 new members.

MEMORIALS & 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. Use the enclosed envelope to submit your own intentions..

† MEMORIALS †

<i>In Memory of</i>	<i>Bequeathed by</i>
Marilyn Coffey (<i>past president of LOC Norwich, N.Y.</i>)	Kathleen Sieracki
Patricia Keller Di Iorio (<i>founding board member LOC, St. Joseph, Mo.</i>)	Margot Meier Howard
Katie Gierster	Jean Helene Davis Gayle Johnson Suzanne Johnson
Marguerite Hall (<i>sister of Ann Peffen</i>)	Mary Beth O'Brien
Theresa Hutchison	LOC Lake Travis
Lillian Stephanie Isaacson	LOC Lake Travis
Marianne Oxler	Gayle Johnson Connie O'Brien Mark Riscoe
Kevin Roche	LOC Lake Travis
Sr. Denise Simms	Lucy Ann Saunders
Col. Arthur Stewart	LOC Lake Travis
Sr. Alice Vickers (<i>sister of Joan Kachel</i>)	Joan Kachel
Jerry and Mary Walsh	Joan Kachel
Beulah Whitten	Mary Beth O'Brien
Joseph Varlinsky & Deceased of the Charles Netzel Family	Anna Mae Varlinsky
Edna Pickney Wolfe	David, PJ, Kevin, Caitlin and Lucas Yeargin

† IN HONOR OF †

Doris Hoag (<i>for continued healing</i>)	Suzanne Johnson
Elena Miranda (<i>for healing</i>)	Suzanne Johnson Kathleen Sieracki
Steve Morovitz (<i>for continued healing</i>)	Suzanne Johnson
My family and all souls	Alice Banach
Eleanor Warzoha (<i>for healing</i>)	Suzanne Johnson

Bishop Howard Hubbard (seated) listening to Albany LOC President Candice Stellato.



Mary's Corner

Cont'd from p. 6

low income." Another said "It gives me peace of mind to know there is somewhere to go especially when you are in need. You get help immediately; you take home what you need."

The first Mary's Corner, located at the Cohoes Library, opened in October 2010. It began as a collaboration among the United Church of Cohoes, the City of Cohoes, the parish of St. Edward the Confessor, and the Albany Ladies of Charity. It is now serving 60 – 75 children per month in Cohoes, Watervliet, and Green Island. Each fall, Mary's Corner sponsors a Coats for the Community distribution, in collaboration with organizations and churches in the City of Cohoes. This year over 1,000 coats were collected and distributed.

Mary's Corner at the Sr. Maureen Joyce Center opened in July 2013 and is already serving 60 – 80 children per month, from the Arbor Hill/West Hill/Center City neighborhoods. A family reading promotion program will be offered at each site. Additional information and resources, such as literacy or GED classes, library hours and services, referral and aid services are also available.

All of the resources that families receive at Mary's Corner are free. The Ladies of Charity depends upon the generosity of individuals, school groups, faith formation classes, colleges, parishes, and religious and community organizations to stock Mary's Corner "stores." The outpouring of support and tangible help has been astounding. The members are very grateful to all those who have been the source of such abundance. As one mother stated "This place is a miracle!" ✧



Dates to Remember

- **April 10-12**
Spring LCUSA Board Meeting, Evansville, Ind.
- **September 12-13**
LCUSA National Assembly, Milwaukee
- **Feb. 8-11, 2015**
Catholic Social Ministry Gathering, Washington, DC

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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 2014. Send your check to the LCUSA National Service Center, 100 N. Jefferson Ave., St. Louis, MO 63103-2007

EMMA MEREDITH—Indiana's 2013 Social Worker of the Year

Mary Nell Williams

Emma Meredith, a Lady of Charity in the Evansville association was named Indiana's 2013 Social Worker of the Year. Earlier in the year, Emma had been chosen as the Social Worker of the Year from her region. In addition to this award, Emma has received numerous other awards including the Mother Teresa Service Award (due to her work with the military). She has also been nominated as the 2013 Veterans Social Worker of the year.



Emma accepted her award during the annual Indiana Social Workers conference held in Indianapolis in September. When Mark Fairchild, National Association of Social Workers Executive Director, referred to Khara Williams' nomination of Emma, he indicated that he would be unable to read it in its entirety, as "it is longer than the Affordable Care Act."

From the time Emma was a young child in grade school she was taught by her mother (also a Lady of Charity) and her maternal grandfather to serve the poor. In those early years, among other activities she visited the homebound, the sick, the dying, took food to those who had none and prepared homes

for those who had been evicted. Her life of service has continued in various and numerous ways. She has served as the president and past president of the Ladies of Charity in Evansville, and remains an active member.

Emma's professional career has included a diversity of service as a social worker. These areas include: director of a local nursing facility; medical social worker at two Evansville hospitals including St. Mary's Hospital, an Ascension Health facility where the Daughters of Charity serve; hospice social worker; caseworker with Catholic

Charities and her current role as Primary Care Social Worker with the United States Department of Veterans Affairs. In speaking about her present job, Emma has said that the veterans are "my heart."

Congratulations Emma on this recognition of lifetime service!

Editor's Note: The last issue of the *Servicette* mistakenly placed Evansville in the neighboring state of Illinois. In the article about the Daughters of Charity, Jude Magers should have been recognized as the Vincentian Spiritual Moderator for the Indianapolis Ladies of Charity. ♦

Bastrop Ladies of Charity Celebrate 30 Year Anniversary

Putzie Martin

In August, a Mass was held to celebrate 30 years of service by the Ladies of Charity of Bastrop, Texas. The Most Rev. Joe S. Vasquez, Bishop of Austin, presided with the assistance of Deacon Bill Hobby. The liturgy included a special blessing for the Ladies. During the Mass, Putzie Martin presented a faux check to Bishop Vasquez in the amount of \$3,556,400, representing 444,550 volunteer hours given during the past thirty years. During that time, the Ladies served 16,926 families.

After Mass everyone enjoyed dinner prepared by Steve Venzon and helpers in the Monsignor Dokupil Hall. After a welcome from President Agnes Raz, Celebration Chair Thelma Warren led the prayer and blessing of the food. The

program included a memorial service for 55 deceased members. Maria Barbato rang a bell after the reading of each name. Virginia Dailey and Putzie Martin presented two awards for exceptional support with deep appreciation for many years of service to Kathy and Steve Venzon and Cindy and Reid Sharp. Each couple received a gift of wind chimes.

The Bastrop members operate a thrift store, lead Communion services in nursing homes and work with Pink Santa and Meals on Wheels. They also provide help with the cost of medicines, utility payments, clothing and furnishings. The



Bishop Joe Vasquez (center) and Putzie Martin (left of center) at the Bastrop anniversary celebration.

group has developed a collaboration with the Bastrop County Emergency Food Bank. When the Ladies identify someone who comes too persistently for help, they refer the client to the Food Bank for a budgeting workshop, which includes lessons on shopping and banking.

The Ladies of Charity of Bastrop provide services with humility, simplicity and charity. They are women acting together against all forms of poverty. ♦

Ladies of Charity USA
100 North Jefferson Avenue
St. Louis, MO 63103
Address Service Requested



AIC USA

<http://aic.ladiesofcharity.us>

“To serve rather than to be served”

Vincent de Paul II: Conversion to Sanctity

Carol Schumer, D.C.

1617 – Organized the first Confraternity of Charity (Ladies) in Châtillon
1625 – Established the Congregation of the Mission (Vincentian priests)
1633 – Co-founded the Daughters of Charity with Louise de Marillac

These turning points, each eight years apart, significantly impacted the second half of Vincent’s life. After preaching that pivotal sermon, he was forevermore focused on assisting, accompanying persons living in poverty with the help of many collaborators – laity, clergy and religious.

With the progress of the Congregation of the Mission community, Vincent’s public contribution was set in motion. His work of preaching in the country- side and preparing others to do so was put in place. This was expanded when he commenced Tuesday Conferences for priests: prayer and interaction around participants’ convictions fostering high ideals in the clergy. Many future bishops attended these weekly sessions and were nurtured in their vocations.

The development of the Confraternities continued to occupy Vincent. Coordination at the local level allowed flexibility to meet new situations as they arose. The women responded to the needs of beggars, prisoners, convicts and victims of famine and war. Quickly, the importance of supervision and the personal commitment of the Ladies (who began sending their servants to minister) surfaced. Louise de Marillac helped in these

areas with regular visits to the associations and formation of the Daughters of Charity.

Vincent directed the Sisters of the Visitation who were close to his heart due to his friendship with and the insistence of their co-founders, Francis de Sales and Jane Frances de Chantal. Retreats for ordinands and lay people were additional activities that captured

his attention. As a result, from 1633 onward, Vincent knew an increasingly vital role in ecclesiastical and civil matters in France.

The care of abandoned children (1638); a first crusade of charity for those ravaged by war and plague with the contributions of the Ladies of Charity (1639); serving meals twice daily for thousands at St. Lazare, his home base (1652); regularly accepting, soliciting and acknowledging donations of food and clothing; renting a house for prostitutes and refugees (1652) as well as addressing the spiritual and material needs of many people accentuated his growing ministry. On another level, Vincent gathered abandoned ecclesiastics and offered them assistance. All this reminds us of the scope of his practical and ever-evolving charity.

In 1643, at 63 years of age, Vincent undertook an entirely different responsibility in his membership on the Council of Ecclesiastical Affairs. Selecting holy men as bishops; renewing monasteries; confronting Jansenism and the French government’s handling of the plight of poor people were some of the ways Vincent was influential in this arena. Involvement outside of France also won him over. CMs were sent to Italy, Ireland and Scotland; Daughters to Poland and beyond.

The scope and expanse of Vincent’s labor and focus are incomprehensible today. Furthermore, along with his ministry, his depth of spirituality grew. At his death in 1660, his sanctity seized the hearts and minds of all who knew him. He had been unmistakably transformed by God, through poor people, into *Saint Vincent!*

Reflection: How does Vincent’s conversion speak to me today?

Primary sources: O’Donnell, Hugh CM, *Vincent de Paul: His Life and Way*, *Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac: Rules, Conferences and Writings*, pages 13–23

