

LADIES OF CHARITY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

VOL. 58 NO. 1 FALL 2019

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FOR LCUSA
NATIONAL
ASSEMBLY
2019!

SERVICETTE

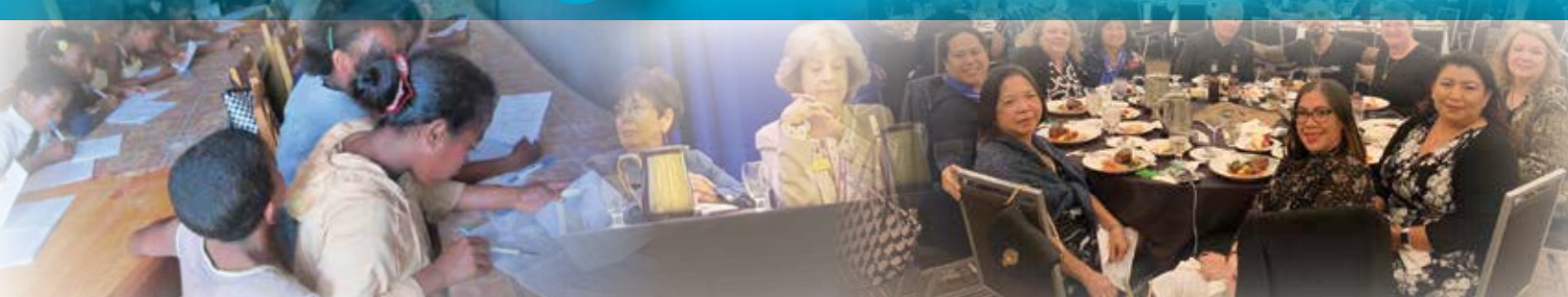
TO SERVE RATHER THAN BE SERVED



AIC USA



LADIES OF CHARITY:
Fulfilling OUR MISSION
WORLDWIDE.



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 next issue of the **SERVICETTE**:

Due date for submission of articles for the next issue is **March 15, 2020**. Articles and photos can be sent by email to: office@ladiesofcharity.us. Articles and photos should be sent separately and not within the text document.

Please contact us for information.

LETTER FROM THE LCUSA PRESIDENT

Debbie Chadwick, LCUSA President



One at a time...

As we celebrate the successful National Assembly in Salt Lake City and congratulate the Committee that provided another wonderful, faith filled and meaningful experience I find myself asking what we can do as Ladies of Charity to attract more women to join us in our important works throughout the United States. The Mission of our founders St. Vincent de Paul and St. Louise de Marillac that began over 400 years ago in seventeenth century France is just as critically important today as it was to the family that was in need that began the genesis and creation of Ladies of Charity. It started with one Homily on one Sunday for one family.

It is no secret to our Associations in the United States that membership numbers have declined over the past 10 years. There are a variety of reasons that could be assigned as the answer to that question but that brings me to a few questions that I have for us to contemplate. Is the work begun by St. Vincent and St. Louise still important to us today and do we, as Ladies of Charity, have the overwhelming will to continue the work of our founders? Who will commit to perform the important work each of us provide in our Associations when we can no longer? What is our plan for that role to be filled? Yes our plan for our successor? Who will step in and assist our brothers and sisters in need? Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Proverbs 31:8. Who will speak up for and provide compassionate care with dignity and respect to those marginalized by society? Ladies of Charity.

My Goal, as your President, is to expand the membership to 10,000 by January 1, 2021. My term will be over and the succession plan in place for Ladies of Charity will have taken course. Granted, it is a big Goal, one that some might say is unobtainable. I think it is absolutely obtainable with a good game plan. A good game plan demands good players on a good team, a bench, if you will who can step in and play the game when others may be unable for whatever reason. We are those players and we are the team. Please consider making an effort over the next few months to personally invite and educate women in your parishes to join us as we fight for human dignity and respect. A personal invitation to be on the team. Do you know one woman who might join us in our efforts to help make the world a better place for those the world has forgotten?

Today I invite you to make this your goal too. How do we begin? Just as those attending the Assembly in September did, hold up your index finger right now; this represents the one woman we each will ask to join us in our work this year and in the coming years. Join together as Ladies of Charity in the promise of hope and joy that is so important to our neighbors that benefit from the important supports provided by each of you every day. Share the commitment of inviting one woman at your local Association meetings. Reach out to other women to secure the continuation of the work of Ladies of Charity; our work, the work of our founders. The work that makes our hearts swell with happiness and sometimes sorrow as we continue to provide a road map to effect systemic change. Matthew 22:36-40 Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and prophets. These commandments of Jesus are crystallized into the formation of the Mission of St. Vincent, St. Louise, and St. Elizabeth Ann Seton to this day. Join me as we strive to reach our goal of 10,000.



Most Reverend David A. Zubik

"MAY THE BODY OF CHRIST..."

Our Holy Bible and our sacred tradition tell us that baptized Christians are all members of the Body of Christ. But what does it look like when Catholics live as if we truly believe that to be so? In

my estimation, the Ladies of Charity, your worldwide mission to help the poor and suffering, show what it means to be the Body of Christ.

Saint Paul writes about the Church as one body with many parts, pointing out that the head can't disregard the feet for not being able to chew or speak. That image points to an important truth about the Church: The Body of Christ isn't just a collection of different parts, each doing their own thing. In a living body, every part of the body serves the whole body, keeping it alive, healthy and functioning.

You as Ladies of Charity are doing work that is crucial yet rarely on the front page of newspapers or the lead story of TV's evening news. Where something breaks down or causes pain, you as Ladies of Charity rush in to help and to heal. And as Church, we are all renewed through your service of charity. Truly, you model what it means to be the Body of Christ.

Here in the United States, you do so much for the elderly, for women who struggle to raise children in difficult circumstances, for children whose parents can't provide for them. Globally, more than 100,000 Ladies of Charity bring aid

to people in 53 nations, where poverty is often life-threatening and where violence is a daily threat. Truly, you model what it means to be the Body of Christ.

In Madagascar, where the Ladies of Charity USA has a special partnership, you build schools for children who would otherwise have none. You help women to get the education they were too often denied as children. Truly, you model what it means to be the Body of Christ.

In South America and Asia, when the government is slow to bring help after an earthquake, the Ladies of Charity provide assistance without red tape. Truly, you model what it means to be the Body of Christ.

When a hurricane devastates an island such as Puerto Rico, you as Ladies of Charity stand ready with words of love and hope, as well as dry clothes, food and other practical assistance. Truly, you model what it means to be the Body of Christ.

As you Ladies of Charity fulfill your mission worldwide, you draw all of us closer together in the Body of Christ. You make us healthier. You make us holier. You make us more whole. Truly, you model what it means to be the Body of Christ.

One of my professors in the seminary used to include this prayer before receiving the Holy Eucharist: "May the Body of Christ enable us to embody Christ."

Thanks for living that prayer.

BUFFALO JLOC SPONSOR NICARAGUA STUDENTS

Marian Snyder, JLOC Moderator Diocese of Buffalo

St Mary's Junior Ladies from Lancaster, NY are continuing their work with the Nicaragua Missions and our local missionary, Ann Marie Zon. This past year the Juniors used money earned from their bake sale to sponsor 3 second grade elementary school girls for the 2018 school year. For \$30 a year an elementary school student will receive a uniform, shoes, books, a book bag and a lunch each day! Shown in the photo are Juana Alexi, Iris Magdalena and Maria Dolora, all ready for school! The Juniors were so thrilled with the project they have sponsored three more children this year as well.

There is information about the mission on their website: www.projectnica.com including how to sponsor a student of any age, or purchase a cow or a pig for a village, along with other options.

In Nicaragua, the government dictates that children attending school must have a uniform, shoes and books in order to attend school. Unfortunately many families are too poor to provide these necessary items and are unable to enroll their children in school. There are some cases where families cannot even afford food for their children and hand them over to the Mission orphanage. In doing so, the children receive food, clothing, shelter and are provided the means to attend school.

In 2017 the Juniors collected over 170 dolls and assembled dignity bags for the little girls at the Nicaragua Mission. Then in 2018 they collected over 350 pairs of shoes. Each summer the Juniors deliver their donations to the Mission Donation Center just outside Buffalo and spend the morning helping out at the Center.

The Juniors have gained so much from this experiences and are thrilled when notes and photos are sent to them from Nicaragua!



Juana Alexi, Iris Magdalena and Maria Dolora



MADAGASCAR:

AN ISLAND IN NEED

Holly Walter, Director
Northeastern Region

Madagascar is a small island country off the southeastern coast of the continent of Africa. Where it lies geographically has a lot to do with environmental and economic conditions found on the island. The island is subjected to many tropical storms that ravage homes and farms on a regular basis and make life very difficult for the residents. In addition to the climate problems, there are many social and ethnic conflicts among the people and women and girls suffer from economic and domestic restrictions and deprivations especially. Women have no right to inherit and are very often abandoned by their fathers and are forced into early marriage. Girls often don't have the opportunity to go to school or be able to improve their lives.

In addition to environmental havoc caused by tropical cyclones every year, the environment was being degraded by the population of Madagascar when they destroyed the forests and trees needed for survival. The region around Ambolosy near the city of Vohipeno, the center of this update, has no factories and no jobs for citizens except agriculture. All of these factors mentioned so far create a situation of extreme poverty for the population. There is no governmental intervention such as food stamps, unemployment benefits, or government run programs to aid the poor of Madagascar.

The Catholic Mission of the Lazarists, the volunteers of AIC and LCUSA, priests from the Congregation of the Mission, and the Daughters of Charity work very hard to help the people of the area by providing spiritual guidance, land for the families to farm, technical assistance in the breeding of animals and in the growing of crops, educational opportunities for both boys and girls, and help in the formation of a sense of real citizenship for the people. All their efforts help protect the environment and help the families help themselves in maintaining their basic needs so they are able to send their children to school. Education is the first and best way to get out of the cycle of poverty. It is a way for women to attain equality with men and therefore improve their lives and living standards of their families. These volunteers and missionaries have helped the people achieve their goals of economic independence

and human dignity so necessary for progress and an end to extreme poverty. The school year of 2018-2019 had 328 children participating from preschool, primary and secondary grades, and college level programs such as technical courses, university classes, and paramedical instruction. Many more children are going to school now than in years past and this has improved the economy and outlook of the people considerably.

Now that you understand the current conditions in Ambolosy and Vohipeno and the goals of the leaders helping the people there we need to answer the question of how the Ladies of Charity became involved in assisting the citizens of this area of Madagascar.

Twinning with Madagascar actually began with LCUSA leader Doris Hoag in the spring/summer of 2003 when she was in Nice France for a AIC meeting. AIC had told attendees of the needs of this poverty stricken nation and suggested that the U.S. Ladies of Charity could twin with Madagascar and help the people financially. At the Assembly in Pasadena California in 2003 Doris told the story of Madagascar for the first time. A basket was provided and a little over \$600.00 was collected. Over the years collections varied in amounts so different strategies were employed to increase donations. Today in 2019 our goal is to collect at least \$5000.00 a year in donations from both the assembly and people sending in donations throughout the year. Letters and envelopes are placed in assembly registration packets and are also sent out to individuals and associations across the country.

We help the people of Madagascar for the same reasons we help those in our individual communities who are dealing with poverty. The fact that they live in a foreign country does not change the need or desire to help those suffering from circumstances that keep them from individual and community growth and a full and rewarding life. Education is the key in helping people escape the cycle of poverty and there have been vast improvements on all levels especially in the education of women and girls. Our continued support will enable the people of Madagascar make transformational change in their lives.

HISTORY OF THE MADAGASCAR TWINNING PROJECT

Mary Ann Morovitz

Twinning with Madagascar actually began with Doris Hoag in the spring/summer of 2003 when she was in Niece for an AIC meeting. AIC told her of the needs of this poverty stricken country and asked her if the US Ladies would twin with that country. Doris proceeded to ask me if I would be the Twinning Representative in the US, thereby developing twinning not only with AIC but to also develop a twinning among our Ladies. Despite my efforts, via numerous letters, the latter has not really taken off. However, there are some associations that do twin among themselves and with other countries, they just are not doing so through me. I believe Doris was hoping to develop a better "control" or record keeping of the associations that do twin.

In Pasadena, at the assembly in 2003, Doris Hoag told the story of Madagascar for the first time. A basket was provided for a collection of money. We collected a little over \$600.00. At the assembly in Memphis in 2004 we collected a little over \$300.00. At the spring board meeting in 2005 I met with the twinning committee, I was the chairman of this committee. We brainstormed, realizing that we had to do more to encourage the ladies to give more. Mary Beth <O'Brien> suggested the idea of sending out an envelope prior to the assembly because this was so successful in Albany using the breadline theme. Doris had provided some pictures of the children in Madagascar that had been sent to her. I preferred the one of the children holding their sticks which they brought for the fire to cook their food. Sister Mary Ann came up with the saying "The Children bring the wood for the fire. Will you provide the food?"

LCUSA has been raising money to support the Madagascar twinning project ever since and have regularly received wonderful thanks from those we help in Madagascar.



LIVES FOR SALE: HUMAN TRAFFICKING...THE REAL STORY

Nicholas Silverstein, St. John's Preparatory School, Grade 9

There are many businesses in the world. Some are darker than others. The darkest among them is human trafficking. This past spring, Saint John's University held its annual conference on human trafficking that was organized by the University's Vincentian Center for Church and Society, St. John's University's chapter of the Ladies of Charity and Catholic Relief Services. I went with 11 other students from Saint John's Preparatory School to gain a deeper understanding of the causes and impact this crime has on many men, women, and children who are doomed to suffer this cruel way of life.

Sr. Angela Reed, RSM from Mercy Global Action at the United Nations Catholic Relief Services opened the conference by giving background information and defining trafficking as "the selling and ownership of humans that is done for sexual or laboring manners." She explained humans are sold and kept as slaves of labor, sex acts, or used for organ/body ownership and is a reoccurring crime that affects a great numbers of the world population. Sr. Angela explained that there are currently between 20 and 30 million enslaved people in the world today, and between 600,000 and 800,000 people are trafficked across international borders every year.

People stuck in these lives have no way out, as their owners can blackmail them or threaten them if they leave or try to leave. For example, a very common victim of trafficking and forced labor is an illegal immigrant. If the worker tries to leave, their owners threaten to report them as being illegal, which can get them deported or imprisoned. When you are stuck in this life, it is nearly impossible to escape. That is why spreading awareness to this practice is extremely important, as those who are trapped in this life cannot speak for themselves, and if they could, they would put themselves or others they care about at risk.

An actual victim of human trafficking was present to tell about her experience. We met with Mely Lenario, a woman from Cebu Philippines who was trafficked as a teenager. She told us a horrifying story with very sad events. Her

story really opened up my mind to how hard this life can be. When Mely was a child, she witnessed her step-dad raping her sister, and was threatened when she tried to intervene. Her family was very poor and she always lived in rough conditions, had little money, and had to walk two hours to and back from school everyday.

Eventually, she had to leave school as a young girl and managed to find work, but the intentions of the managers were much more sinister than she could have imagined. Mely was sold to traffickers, and taken complete advantage of.

She became a slave used for sex. She barely had customers at first, as whenever a man tried to engage sex with her, she would immediately start sobbing and they would go away so her boss threatened her if she didn't start accepting clients. Mely was very afraid so she did. Sometimes her boss gave her drugs to keep her going throughout the day. She was miserable and seemed doomed to live this sufferable life. Fortunately, by chance on the street, she met a priest and nun who helped her escape and break away.



St. John's University TORCH PHOTO/SAMANTHA DENINNO

Mely's story really opened my mind to the evil of human trafficking. I heard firsthand what kind of negative conditions are caused and the horrifying ones that can come from being trafficked. Mely's story really brought out why human trafficking needs to be stopped, and why being educated on it is so important. More awareness can lead to more actions taken to stop human trafficking and put an end to this blood stained business. Human trafficking is a business that most are vaguely aware of, but not all know or comprehend what really happens when a person falls victim to this business. The abuse, the usage, is beyond what the average person will be able to comprehend. That is why it is important to raise awareness, and truly put to light how horrific human trafficking really is. To help yourself and others, try going to a human trafficking conference yourself, and tell others what you have learned. Allowing more and more people to become educated on human trafficking is one of the best hopes to stop it.



SALT LAKE CITY HOSTS THE 39TH LCUSA NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Chris Young

SALT LAKE CITY – The Ladies of Charity of the United States of America (LCUSA) held its 39th Annual Assembly at the Hilton City Center in Salt Lake City on Sept. 20-21, 2019.

This year's assembly, hosted by the two Ladies of Charity associations in Utah, brought about 160 members and clergy from throughout the country to Utah. There was an atmosphere of "friendliness and joy," said MaryAnn Dantonio, AIC Executive Board member and past LCUSA president.

During the opening Mass on Friday morning, Fr. Richard Gielow, CM, director of the Vincentian Parish Mission Center in Kansas City, Mo., and national spiritual advisor to LCUSA, said, "TGIF – Today God is First." Fr. Gielow continued by saying the Beatitudes were Jesus' greatest sermon, influenced by Mary his mother. "It was a great strategic plan. Peace must first come from inside of each one of us. The ladies in St. Vincent's time knew this and could bring peace to the people." "The world of peace is love, mind, body, soul and heart", Fr. Gielow said. "Sow good seeds wherever you go. No God – no peace. Know God – know peace. Get to know God who loves us. This world is hungry for justice." Fr. J.J. Schwall, pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Salt Lake City, was the celebrant.

Bishop Oscar A. Solis of the Diocese of Salt Lake City, welcomed the Ladies of Charity following the opening Mass. "It's so nice to see and be with women in our church who do works of charity to make present the love of God, especially to those who are in need," he said. "Your associations give a strong message of hope to our society that has grown cold and indifferent to the miseries of the poor and marginalized members of our society today." He concluded with, "You have responded well with delicacy and tenderness. Thank you for your apostolate and works of love and charity to others enslaved by poverty and other struggles in their lives, who are left in the margins of our society."

In her Plenary address, Sr. Margaret Keaveney, D.C., assistant to the president for Mission, Outreach and Archives of St. Vincent's in Santa Barbara, Calif., addressed the assembly theme, "Begin to Weave and God Will Provide the Thread: Ladies of Charity in Action." "God is the divine Master weaver," she said. "We are his chosen disciples, and are invited to approach the loom of life, counting on him

to provide the thread for us to do our part in weaving his love into a tapestry of ministries that will lift and lighten the burden of our downtrodden, forgotten, poverty-stricken sisters and brothers. Vincent gave us the thread 400 years ago and we are called to weave the tapestry. Vincent told the workers, "first the heart and then the work," Sr. Margaret said. "Today God continues that call."



Sr. Paule Freeburg, a Daughter of Charity, gave the second Plenary address on the theme, "St. Louise – Weaving with God's Thread." St. Louise de Marillac, the patroness of Christian social work, was born in 1591 and died in 1660. She was canonized in 1934. Louise was born out of wedlock to Louis de Marillac, a member of the aristocracy; her mother is unknown. Her father loved her, but married a wife who did not want Louise. "It would seem that Louise's life was woven with dark threads," Sr. Paule said. "At age 3, she was sent to the Dominican convent in Poissy where her aunt was a Dominican nun, because Louise was not welcome by her step-mother. She received a classical education and was schooled among the elite. She was introduced to the arts, humanities, and to a deep spiritual life. She studied theology, philosophy, Latin, possibly Greek, and learned to paint. "All of this was important for God's plan – teaching children, girls, the Ladies of Charity, and later, the Daughter of Charity to read and write."

Continued on page 10 ►

THE HOLY SPIRIT, ELECTRICITY, & SODA BREAD IN SALT LAKE CITY

Lori Donnester

I heard a beautiful sermon Saturday night and it sparked a memory.

One day a little boy said to his father, "I don't believe in the Holy Spirit. I can't see him. How do I know he's there?"

Luckily, his father worked for the electrical company at a power station. Later that night, he took his son to work to see the water pouring into the turbines causing them to turn. They watched for a bit and the father said, "Can you see the electricity?"

A frown crossed the boy's face and he shook his head.

"No."

His father then took his son over to a window that overlooked the lights in the city sparkling like a blanket laid out across the valley. "But can you see the effects of electricity?"

A smile glimmered in the boy's mahogany brown eyes. "Yes, I can see that."

"So you know it's there because you can see its effects." A wide grin took over the boy's face and he wiggled and laughed. "Yes!"

The Holy Spirit speaks in the language of love. We know the Holy Spirit is there because we see the effects of the language of love. On St. Patrick's weekend, the Ladies of Charity at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish sell soda bread as a fundraiser for our services in Salt Lake City. We are worked extra hard this year because we were hosting the Ladies of Charity USA National Convention here in Salt Lake City. After the Saturday night Mass that weekend, a young man was there with his wife and child. The soda bread was spread out on the table and people were in line, buying. He waited until the line was gone and then asked to buy what was left. He said that he didn't want any for himself so that we could just give away or resell what he 'bought'. After he paid for what was on the table, he noticed a box under the table. He asked what was in it.

"More bread," was the answer.

"Oh, so you're holding out on me, eh?" He 'bought' what was under the table as well.

The total of what he gave us was about \$195. We made close to \$600 in one weekend - a record for soda bread sales.

We had never seen that man or his family before that day. We don't know who he is.

But the effects of his actions sparkle before us as bright as the blanket of lights the little boy saw when his father taught him how to see the Holy Spirit.

I think the Ladies of Charity organization knows how to speak the language of love. I hope we can show others how to see the Holy Spirit. And I know that man showed us how to see the Holy Spirit as well.

We enjoyed seeing you in Salt Lake City this past September.



OLPH LADIES OF CHARITY LOSES FOUNDRESS

Toni K. Gaines



*Laurretta B. Sullivan, Foundress,
OLPH Ladies of Charity*

Born September 4, 1916, Ms. Laurretta B. Sullivan died of natural causes at 102 years young on April 25, 2019. She was one of five charter members of the Ladies of Charity at Our Lady of Perpetual Help (OLPH) Catholic Church established in 1958 and its first president serving from 1958–1966. In addition, she was the oldest member of OLPH. Some could say, she was the Mother of the Church on “THE HILL.”

As a Lady of Charity, Ms. Sullivan served as an officer at all levels of the organization. She was the first Black President of the Archdiocese of Washington LOC serving from 1970-1972. At the District of Columbia Parish Units level, she served as President, Secretary and Treasurer over the years. Ms. Sullivan was a role model for the LOC always working for the underprivileged, especially children from low-income families. She never stopped working for the poor. We, at OLPH, have loss a true “MISSIONARY DISCIPLE.” Her work is done! May her soul rest in eternal peace.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA LADIES OF CHARITY “KEEPING THE LEGACY ALIVE”

Toni K. Gaines, Archdiocese of Washington, District of Columbia Parish Groups

St. Martin of Tours Ladies of Charity (LOC) hosted the District of Columbia LOC Quarterly Meeting on March 10, 2019 which was officiated by President, Cynthia McFarlane. One of the members mentioned that there were several mother/daughter members in attendance which was a blessing to witness and that we should capture this moment in time.

Once we took notice of the many years of dedicated service given to the LOC by the matriarchs present, it was realized what a legacy these ladies have established for our organization to continue its great works in the community for the less fortunate. There are several other mother/daughter members not present, but should be noted.

After taking a survey of the entire District of Columbia membership, it was determined that we’ve had a total of (21) pairs of mother/daughter members. By parish: Our Lady of Perpetual Help (15); St. Gabriel (2); and, St. Martin of Tours (4).



Seated are the mothers/daughters standing behind—from left to right: Mary Goldring/Alice Goldring; Mary Fairley/Carolyn Budoo; Cora Guerra/Bertha Guerra; Evelyn Miles/Kim Taylor; and, Ethel Taylor/Sandra Watson and Octavia Taylor-Jackson.

Continued from page 7 ▶

When Louise was 13 her father died, so she went to live with a spinster woman, where she learned domestic and household management skills; there were other girls there as well. "This was divine providence, but also carried the sense that she wasn't wanted and never had a family," Sr. Paule said. "She made a vow to become a nun and tried to enter a Capuchin convent but was rejected, probably because of frail health or because of her illegitimacy. Her spiritual advisor told Louise God had other plans for her."

Louise entered into an arranged marriage with Antoine Le Gras on Feb. 6, 1613. Antoine was a nobleman but of lower status than the Marillacs. She had a son, Michel, who was sickly as a child.

"It is important to note that Louise's life can be depicted by a series of doors closing," Sr. Paule said.

"Louise was an intelligent woman who thought and acted quickly and who was a great organizer.

Louise carried the note of Pentecost in her pocket from 1623 to her death. It is the defining moment of her life. It so impacted Louise's life that it remains for us, the Daughters of Charity, a transformative event. We elect our superioress general, the successor to Louise, on the Monday after Pentecost." Brighter threads weave through Louise's life, Sr. Paule said. "She was spiritually strong. She believed that the Lumiere of Pentecost relieved her doubts, her concerns about leaving or staying with her husband and she believed it had been revealed to her."

In about 1629, Louise told Vincent she wanted to turn her entire life over to God to serve the poor, Sr. Paule said. "He urged her on; they had come to know one another well, and shared a spiritual bond focused on the poor. Little by little Vincent guided her to a better self-esteem; they were friends."

"Louise went from a young woman who had threads of uncertainty, sadness, sufferings, doubts and guilt, to Servant of the Poor, to holiness. The Patroness of all Christian social workers, a teacher, a nurse, she founded the first orphanage, a congregation of consecrated women, became the moderator and spiritual advisor of all the Ladies of the Conferences," Sr. Paule said. "What Vincent saw in her we now all see: A woman of great strength and wisdom. God wove a masterpiece."

As followers of St. Vincent and St. Louise, the Ladies of Charity have the charism of caring for those in need, the elderly and the sick. That is why LCUSA started the Caregiving project. The Ladies Charity Caregiving Board Chair, Marilyn Martone, addressed some of the challenges that she and the rest of the LCUSA Board have experienced and noted since the onset of the Caregiving project and the lessons they have learned to inform them how additional sites will be imple-

mented. She announced that the Board is excited to be at a point where they are searching for the next viable location with a strong Ladies of Charity presence, as their role is so critical in making the project successful. She then introduced the new executive director of the project.

Sandra Jurani, executive director of the Ladies of Charity Caregiving, then spoke in more detail about the current state of the Pittsburgh pilot office, including the fact that after so many months of preparation, there are now trained caregivers providing care to clients in the community, and her gratitude at the efforts of the staff, "two of whom are Ladies of Charity,

and the volunteers who had dedicated so much of their time and expertise," Jurani said. "The volunteer mentorship program that has been developed and now implemented in the Pittsburgh arena, whereby a Lady of Charity is assigned to a caregiver to provide support, encouragement, and stability to the workforce. In a field that experiences an 83 percent annual turnover rate, this is a differentiator that may lead to

better employee retention and positively impact caregivers, who are notoriously underappreciated for the work they do." There were a number of thoughtful and pointed inquiries about topics ranging from leveraging payor relationships and reimbursement, marketing efforts and ideas, and some concerns and requests for clarification from areas of the country that may be considering supporting Caregiving's expansion into their regions. "It is truly a pleasure to be the bearer of good news," said Jurani. "There is so much passion behind this mission and it is very gratifying to be able to report that the hard work has finally paid off and we are providing caregiving services in the greater Pittsburgh region. We are excited to begin conversations in other areas of the country where there is a strong group of Ladies of Charity who are just as enthusiastic and dedicated to helping care for the elderly and disabled in their community by sharing the Vincentian values through the Ladies of Charity Caregiving platform."

During the assembly, the Ladies of Charity had the opportunity to choose from four projects offered in two breakout sessions: "Give Me a Chance," "The INN Between," "No One Dies Alone," and "Welfare Square."

Give Me a Chance, Inc., was presented by Sr. Arthur Gordon, D.C., executive director as of 2016; she is a nurse by profession. Give Me a Chance is a Daughter of Charity ministry that through its programs low-income women can become empowered by learning marketable skills that provide them with opportunities to become self-sufficient, while also enriching their children's lives through education. The center offers sewing classes that help women learn professional-level skills for use in the workplace. "We have recently added more classes, such as English as a Second Language, beginning Computer and Keyboarding," Sr. Arthur said. "The De Marillac Formal Attire is a non-profit retail boutique that sells prom, wedding, Quinceanera, and other formal wear. It also provides





opportunity for trainees to learn skills in retail, marketing and money management.”

Students in grades K-6 receive free after-school help with their homework difficulties, and can participate in fun learning activities, such as science experiments, music and art. The center also provides Arts for Spirituality for adults and children age 12 and older. They are invited to learn how to play the piano or guitar, and how to draw and paint using different techniques, while setting the mind and heart toward prayer. Computer Literacy classes are aimed toward empowering families with educational resources. “We host computer literacy classes so those who have access to those resources can use them to their full potential,” said Sr. Arthur. “Our Guadalupe Garden is open to the community. The volunteers made this an amazing place of beauty and serenity. A statue and shrine of Our lady of Guadalupe stands tall, watching over the garden.”

Another breakout session was The INN Between, a homeless hospice, presented by Kim Correa, founding executive director. The mission of The INN Between is to end the tragic history of vulnerable people dying on the streets of our community by providing a supportive and safe haven for people who have nowhere to go during a medical crisis. Prior to The INN Between, no adequate solution existed for housing terminally ill and medically frail homeless people, resulting in an average of 50 deaths on Salt Lake area streets annually. It adheres to the hospice philosophy of providing care for the sick, especially the terminally ill, and treating the whole person by providing support for his or her emotional, social, and spiritual needs, not simply the medical symptoms. “The INN Between is not a licensed hospice or medical provider—our home is the critical missing link for individuals who don’t have access to hospice or medical care simply because they lack housing,” Correa said.

The medical community is focused on the social determinants of health, which centers on safe housing, basic needs, and access to healthcare as the foundation for overall population health. The INN Between ensures that individuals experiencing homelessness have access to safe housing, basic needs, and critical healthcare so that no individuals are left to suffer or die on the streets of the community.

In the breakout session No One Dies Alone, Brian Zenger, MD/PhD, and University of Utah student in Biomedical Engineering, explained this is a volunteer program that provides the reassuring presence of a volunteer companion to dying patients who would otherwise be alone. Zenger became involved with the death and dying community during medical school as a founding volunteer coordinator for the NODA Program at the University of Utah Health Sciences, and has expanded his role to co-director. “Death is a journey of letting go and forgiving,” Zenger said. “Each is a different process we work through. The last senses to go when one is dying are touch and hearing. We can acutely hear what is going on and

what is being said around us before we die.”

“Death is a universal phenomenon,” Zenger said. In NODA, “we train people to be neutral and have a healing presence,” he said. “There is a difference between healing and curing. Curing is a return to normal, where healing is dealing with what you have.”

The last breakout session was Welfare Square, a 13-acre complex in Salt Lake City, which is owned and operated by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Since its beginnings during the Great Depression, the Square has grown to include 11 operations and offices. It is part of the Church’s efforts to care for the poor and needy, help people become self-reliant, and provide meaningful opportunities to serve others. Facilities include a bishops’ storehouse, bakery, cannery, dairy processing plant, employment resource center, thrift store, grain elevator, home storage center, and other services. Joel Moriyama, who presented this session, has worked for the Church for 41 years in information technology, physical facilities, human resources, and now in welfare services. He is the manager of the bishops’ storehouse where individuals and families can receive assistance with food and commodities.

Following the breakout sessions, LCUSA board representatives presented a Best Practices panel. (The contents of the Power Points presented here can be seen on AIC.ladiesofcharity.us.)

Susan Unbehaun, a board director from the Southern Region, explained the requirements in grant writing. Know what the grant is funding, and how much your organization can support, and if there are any partners. Know what the time frame is and how the project will continue after the start up. Most importantly, can the success be measured?

Next, your mission statement should answer three key questions. What needs does your organization address? What are you doing to address these needs? And, what principles or beliefs guide your work? The goals of the grantor and the grantee must align. It’s possible to know the grantor’s goals by looking at who they are donating to by visiting their website and checking their guidelines. For local grantors, narrow your list of possible funders by their focus, interest and geographical scope. A grant resource is www.catholicfundingguide.com.

Karen Radu, the Mid-Atlantic Region V.P. and membership committee chairwoman, reported that as a member of the Vincentian Family, we serve using the model of St. Vincent de Paul and St. Louise de Marillac. We are interested in the spiritual needs as well as the material needs of those we serve. Associations determine their own projects after analyzing the needs of the poor and underserved in their geographic area. The goal of each association is to retain and attract new members, which can be done by advertising in church bulletins, flyers, by word of mouth, Instagram, websites, Facebook, or other methods such as the LCUSA Servicette magazine or ministry fairs, or by encouraging everyone to bring one new member to a meeting. Members can also connect with other Catholic women’s conferences or Vincentian groups. Engage prospective members to attend your monthly meetings and get involved in your projects. Have new membership packets ready to welcome them that include AIC-LCUSA website information.

Continued on page 13 ►



*Celine (Sally) Kingsley
"Called to Service Award"*

Sally received the highest award level, known as the **"Called to Service Award"** which recognizes individuals who have given 4,000 hours or more of volunteer service in a lifetime. The ceremony was held at a luncheon on March 28, 2019 at the Statler's Erie Room at E.C.C. North Campus. On hand to present the award was Erie County

Executive, Mark Polancarz and Timothy Hogues, Commissioner of Senior Services.

Along with the ultimate honor of presidential recognition, Sally received a personalized certificate, an official pin and a congratulatory letter from the president of the United States.

CELINE (SALLY) KINGSLEY

RECIPIENT OF THE PRESIDENTIAL SERVICE AWARD

Kathy Roseti

CELINE (SALLY) KINGSLEY

As a Member of the Buffalo Ladies of Charity, Sally is the recipient of the Presidential Volunteer Service Award.

"Called to Service Award"

The highest award level which recognizes individuals who have given 4,000 hours or more of volunteer service in a lifetime.

✧ *Congratulations Sally, and we thank you for your service!* ✧

Congratulations

BUFFALO'S 19TH ANNUAL *Style Show*

Kathy Roseti



Buffalo LOC's 19th Annual Style Show. This is our largest fundraiser of the year. It was held on Saturday, September 28th at the Columns Banquets in Elma, NY. Approximately 300 members and friends attended where they were able to purchase name brand clothing, purses and jewelry donated to the Ladies of Charity Thrift store in Buffalo, NY. Attendees were also able to take part in theme basket raffles, a split club, silent auction and drawing for a quilt handmade by LOC member Mary Carroll. The Style Show was coordinated by a cast of many with Susan Ward and Nancy Ortolano servings Co-Chairs. Our commentator was Mary Alice Demler, a local Buffalo newscaster.



Continued from page 11 ►

The LCUSA Advocacy committee highlighted its work internationally, nationally and regionally. Natalie Boone, a Board Director from the Northeastern Region and Advocacy chairwoman reported that International advocacy occurs with LCUSA (AIC-USA) members in New York, on behalf of AIC-International. Collaborating with other members of the Vincentian Family, work is done on homelessness, climate and environment, violence against women and children, immigration and migration, education, human rights, etc. Nationally, the LCUSA Advocacy committee has begun to post short videos on its website and Facebook page, highlighting issues as they arise. Input from general membership is encouraged. A push for more regional sharing of information was made. Associations are urged to either continue or initiate local advocacy. A reference sheet with advocacy informational links is available on the LCUSA website. The national committee is also asking for more regional representation on the committee.

The last Best Practices presentation was Spirituality. The number of sisters has decreased creating a need for Lay Spiritual Moderators, said Holly Walter, Northeastern Region V.P. and spiritual moderator. "As Ladies of Charity we are all doers and like to get tasks done," Walter said. "But sometimes we forget why we do what we do. We are Scriptural Marthas and forget to be Marys and listen to the teachings of Christ (Luke 30:38-42). We need to reinforce our own spirituality in the teachings of St. Vincent and St. Louise, and not just consider ourselves helping those in need."

The Spiritual Moderator training session is offered after every assembly, where a mentor is assigned to each moderator. It's important to read as much as possible about our founders and other leaders, and to lean on the support of the mentors and other spiritual moderators. "Some of the things I do as Spiritual Moderator in my association is to provide Apostolic reflections for every diocesan board meeting and parish meeting, assess the spiritual needs of the group when providing reflections, plan and lead prayer services, install and re-commission new members of the diocesan board and parish, compose and read Prayers of the Faithful at Ladies of Charity Masses, as well as help plan special services, do scriptural readings, and lead singing at LOC Masses.

Good listening and leadership skills are needed to be an example for others as is a willingness to aid others in developing a spiritual sense of their efforts, and a willingness to learn more about Vincentian Spirituality, and to attend the spiritual moderator course following the assembly.

Following lunch on Sept. 21, no one fell asleep during the Plenary speech given by Joseph Raymond Lucero from Home Boy Industries on the theme, "Escaping the Gang Life Through the Help of God and Fr. Gregory Boyle, S.J." As Debbie Chadwick, LCUSA President, so eloquently phrased it, "He took us out of our comfort zone," she said.

In his talk, Lucero tearfully and emotionally grabbed the hearts of the audience telling his story of how he grew in up a family with a father who was in jail in a home without love. He had a childhood where he related to people because "your dad's in jail, your mom's in jail, well we should have that as a common bond," he said. "I didn't know unconditional love. I joined a gang because I wanted to belong." Abandonment was what he knew. "I'm not worth shit," he said. "I wanted to be a part of something - the gang 'taking a life, so be it, I earned,' he said.



Lucero was sent to prison the first time when he was 8. He spent his teen years locked up in a California youth correctional facility and had spent a total of 13 years in prison by the time he was 26. It was the birth of his son which was the motivating factor for getting out of the gang, joining Criminal and Gang members Anonymous (CGA). When Lucero was in prison and away from his son, it hurt him terribly, he said. "Why didn't my mom and dad love me like I love my kids," he said. "I talk to them, I tell them I love them every day, and I'm open with them. I want them to love and treat everyone with respect. In prison I wanted my mom, but I couldn't say that because they would mess with me."

When he was released from prison in 2003, he joined Home Boy Industries. Using what he learned in CGA, he became a mentor to others trying to leave the gang life. "I had never been in a leadership role before," he said. "I became sober on Cinco de Mayo in 2015. I never used drugs. Music stirred my soul," he said.

He stopped gangbanging - everybody deserves a chance to change, he said. "I had purpose. I didn't know how to be vulnerable," Lucero said. "Fr. Greg (Boyle) was the first person I trusted. That's what the world needs is unconditional love. I cry all the time; I'm in tune with something inside. Numerous brothers have changed, and that is hope."

Lucero's message today is one of change and unconditional love. Talking about his acting career, he said, "I was cast in a movie, they said 'I want you.' Yes, somebody wanted me." "I am better though, because the worst thing I've done ... change is possible one moment, one day at a time." Lucero said. "I have post traumatic stress syndrome and anxiety from my childhood and from being in prison. ...You have to love yourself."

The LCUSA business meeting followed Lucero's talk. Holly Walter gave us an update on our sister association in Madagascar. Peggy Keene and Sr. Claire Debes, D.C. presented certificates to the new Vincentian Spiritual Moderators. These women participated in the Vincentian Spiritual Moderator training in Pittsburgh in 2018, followed by a year of mentoring. We were invited to attend next year's assembly in Knoxville, TN on August 28 and 29, 2020. The Spiritual Moderators sent us off with an "Irish Blessing."

Finally, Bishop Solis welcomed the Ladies of Charity to Mass at the Cathedral of the Madeleine. Fr. Richard Gielow, C.M. concelebrated the Mass, and the children's choir from the Madeleine Choir School led the music. Mass was followed by a wonderful banquet. Many thanks to the Ladies of Salt Lake City and the staff of the Hilton Salt Lake City Center.

MORGAN HILL BACKPACK & SCHOOL SUPPLIES PROJECT

Rosa Avina



For the third year in a row the Ladies of Charity (LOC) Morgan Hill, with funding from the Morsilli Family Fund, helped low-income students in south Santa Clara County begin the school year prepared to learn by filling 250 backpacks with school supplies. The backpacks are distributed through St. Catherine's Community Closet annual Back- to- School Event that takes place throughout the month of July. This event helps low-income families get ready for school by providing gently used children's clothing and shoes, and for the last three years school supplies. This year 147 families were served.

Our LOC chapter is in south Santa Clara County, a region within affluent Silicon Valley. However, sectors within south Santa Clara County suffer disproportionately from poverty. As our chapter learned about the Vincentian model of Systemic Change we struggled with what interventions and strategies we could implement to help poor families in our community achieve self-sufficiency. As a small LOC chapter what could we do?

Four years ago, it was brought to our attention that many children in south Santa Clara County lacked school supplies. Teachers and school administrators told us of children being teased by other children for not having basic school supplies. These children would not request the supplies because they were embarrassed. Educators shared how feeling ashamed and stressed can prevent children from focusing during school lessons and ultimately negatively impact their ability to learn. LOC Morgan Hill membership know studies show that education is the first step to overcoming poverty. We believe for children of low-income families having adequate school supplies could be the first step to paving a path for a successful future.

LOC Morgan Hill compiled a

list of recommended school supplies from the two local school districts and sought funding for the project. In 2017 we received a \$900.00 grant from a local funding source, the Morsilli Family Fund. With these funds, backpacks supplied by St. Catherine's Community Closet and very careful shopping we were able to fill 100 backpacks with much-needed school supplies. We continued to receive the same annual funding from the Morsilli family Fund and in 2018 we filled 150 backpacks. This year we filled 250 backpacks, including 100 filled with supplies specific to middle and high school students. We can annually increase the number of backpacks filled because many of our members purchase school supplies during the back to school sales and donate them to the project. Backpacks are distributed before the Back-to- School sales take place, so the supplies are stored and used the next year. Funds from the Morsilli Family Fund are used to purchase those school supplies still needed.

This year we were made aware that the rate of tobacco use among teens is increasing in south Santa Clara County. We partnered with Santa Clara County Public Health Department to include a pamphlet on the dangers of tobacco use in all the middle and high school backpacks.

The backpacks always include a card with the message, "Wishing you a blessed school year from the Ladies of Charity Morgan Hill". In this small way we let them know God is in their lives and that The Ladies care about them.

The Ladies of Charity Morgan Hill School Backpack Project has become our signature project. It is gratifying to see children excitedly selecting a backpack and how their eyes light up when they see all the new school supplies it contains. Parents tell us how grateful they are to know their children have the supplies they need for the school year. The project also serves as a fun social event for members. We look forward to getting together at a member's home to fill the backpacks, eat delicious food and enjoy each other's company. The event also brings LOC Morgan Hill and the community together as volunteers of all ages and social-economic and ethnic groups assist in filling the backpacks.

St. Vincent de Paul said. "Charity is the cement which binds Communities to God and persons to one another". The Ladies of Charity Morgan Hill School Backpack Project is one of the ways we are living out his words.



KANSAS CITY *Welcomes* NEW MEMBERS

Ruth Wellman

The Ladies of Charity of Metropolitan Kansas City welcomed prospective members at a Wine and Cheese Party held on June 12th at Teal Lotus boutique in Overland Park, Kansas. Several members and prospective members were greeted by the Co-Chairs of the Membership Committee, Erin O'Reilly and Kerry Beller, along with President, Donna Montague. Our Spiritual Moderator, Ruth Noel opened our gathering with a prayer and short explanation of the origin and purpose of our organization. Erin O'Reilly offered new member forms to those interested in joining our association. After social time with our guests, we were given an opportunity to shop in the lovely boutique with a generous discount on the evening's purchases by the shop owner, Trish Goodfriend. As a result of our endeavor, approximately 10 ladies accepted the invitation to participate in our association.



The ladies were presented with a cross during Mass by our celebrant Fr. Richard Gielow.



Thirteen new members Ladies of Charity of Metropolitan Kansas City were officially installed at the June 6 Mass and dinner held at Church of the Nativity in Leawood, Ks. Above, the new members present were: (left to right) Kerry Beller, Michelle Bolin, Joy Cohen, Terri Kern, Dana Lewis, Debbie Lieurance, Teresa Nelkin, Erin O'Reilly, Karen Prewitt, Nancy Rasmussen, and Joan Thum. Not pictured are Ellen Baty and Martha Hausback.

HONORING USA FOUNDESS OF THE LOC, *Catherine Harkins*

Sister Elizabeth Racko



Sister Elizabeth Racko as USA foundress of the LOC, Catherine Harkins

Following the example given in recent National Assemblies where in one of the founders of the Ladies of Charity was personified in period costume and gave presentations, the Gallup, New Mexico, Ladies of Charity recently had a guest speaker, USA foundress of the LOC, Catherine Harkins. Sister Elizabeth Racko, Daughter of Charity and Spiritual Moderator, dressed up as Catherine Harkins. Using Lectio Divina method, members read and shared about Catherine's life based on an article from the Vincentian Spirituality and Formation book. Catherine stressed that in our lives, events don't just come as "happenstance," and God uses our life events to inspire Ladies of Charity to help the poor.



Gallup Ladies of Charity

SJU LADIES OF CHARITY AWARD SERVICE SCHOLARSHIP TO ST. JOHN'S PREPARATORY SCHOOL JUNIOR LADY

Kitty Prager

St. John's Preparatory School in Astoria, New York is very pleased to announce that St. John's University's Ladies of Charity have established a scholarship to be awarded annually to a St. John's Prep Junior Lady of Charity who will be attending St. John's University.

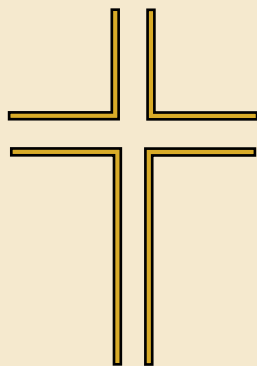
This year's recipient is Mariana Pinanez. Mariana, a four year member and officer of the Junior Ladies of Charity, personifies our society's motto "To Serve rather than be Served." Mariana was involved in initiatives such as the conferences on human trafficking; assisting with the annual coat drive; serving at Hour Children's Thrift Shop, tutoring at Variety Boys' and Girls' Club. A member of the National Honor Society, she was an active leader in our Campus Life Retreat Leader. Mariana will pursue her degree in Biomedical Technology and she is looking forward to continue her commitment to service by becoming involved with SJU's Campus Ministry and service projects the University sponsors.



Mariana Pinanez, Ladies of Charity Scholarship recipient

In 2012 under the guidance of Sr. Margaret John Kelly, DC, the then director of the Vincentian Center for Church and Society, the St. John's University Ladies of Charity established a Junior chapter. Mr. Higgins, principal at St. John's Prep, stated, "We are ever grateful for the Ladies support. They have played such an important role in the formation and mentoring our students, passing on the Vincentian charism by including them on so many fronts. We are very privileged and honored to serve with the Ladies of Charity and know that this scholarship truly supports our students and enables them to continue to study at the University."

St. John's Prep was founded by the Vincentian Fathers in 1870. Members of the worldwide Vincentian family, the school remains committed to the Vincentian mission and to developing leaders committed to joyful service and social justice.



IN MEMORY OF:

Mary Molxar.....	Virginia DeLia
Rita Volz.....	Gaethea Fleck
Dora Croce	Gaethea Fleck
Nieves Cobos	Flora Saenz
Debbie Reilley.....	Marilyn Schumer
Florence McGovern	Betty Donovan
Frank & Mae Slowinski	Peggy Slowinski
Sr. Shelia O'Friel, DC	Suzanne Johnson
Randy Dutton.....	Suzanne Johnson
Rita Robinson	Gayle Johnson
Mary H. Weber	John Webber

BEQUEATHED BY:

IN HONOR OF:

Vincent Ognibene.....	Susan Ognibene
Suzanne Johnson.....	Dorothy Boehr
Suzanne Johnson.....	JoAnn Fallon/Finnegan

ST. MARY'S OF LANCASTER NEW YORK CONDUCTS ITS ANNUAL *"Pennies for Pillows"* COLLECTION

Holly Walter, Northeastern Region

St. Mary's Parish Ladies of Charity in Western New York had its annual "Pennies for Pillows" collection on the weekend of October 12th and 13th after all masses. Parishioners were free to drop all denominations of coins and paper money too into specially marked buckets that the Ladies held just outside all of the church doors. Generous parishioners contributed a record amount this year of over \$1250.00 dollars. This money will be used to help fund the Fresh Start program at the Ladies of Charity store at 1122 Broadway in the City of Buffalo and also local projects in the Lancaster area. The ladies then spent time together on Tuesday October 15th counting all of the proceeds and rolling up all the coins for deposit in the Ladies of Charity account at the bank. Everyone had a good time at the "count" and were very grateful for the generosity of all the parishioners at St. Mary's and for all the support the parish gives to Ladies of Charity throughout the year.



Rolls and rolls of pennies.



Beth Warrington, Betty Papagallo, Marian Snyder, Ann Favre, Denise Golpl, Pat Neu and Holly Walter.



Holly Walter, Ann Favre and Betty Papagallo.

Tributes TO DR. RITA LAVERNE ROBINSON

Viola Johnson-Robinson, Immediate Past President ADW Board

Sr. Claire Debes, D.C., Vincentian Spiritual Moderator ADW LOC

Toni Gaines

The following tributes to Dr. Rita Laverne Robinson were originally published in the January 2019 Issue of the Archdiocese of Washington LOC Newsletter.

A true Lady of Charity, Dr. Rita LaVerne Robinson transitioned to her heavenly re-ward after a long period of illness.

As a Lady of Charity she lived the virtues of visiting the sick. She was involved and passionately advocated for the Ladies of Charity Caregiving Services which started in Pittsburgh this past September. Rita served on the National Committee and was advocating bringing the service to the Archdiocese of Washington. She not only used her gifts of leadership and knowledge in serving the sick, she was an active participant.

She fed the hungry, she and her sister Carolyn also took food to people who were unable to come to the food pantry at her parish Our Lady of Perpetual Help. "I was naked and you clothed me", Rita was involved in providing clothes to those less fortunate through her parish and Catholic Charities. "Imprisoned and you visited me", Rita and her sister Carolyn were involved in the prison ministry helping those returning home adjust to life not being locked up.

If, you read her funeral program you would find out that she was a natural leader and she inspired her siblings and family to attend college and find their gifts in life. She was so proud of her children and her husband, John who was her rock. Rita sat on many boards. All these things shaped who she became.

God has a plan for all of us. We may not have a Doctoral Degree or be an officer in our units, but we all can take serious the vows we took; when we were consecrated as Ladies of Charity to visit the sick, feed the hungry, clothe the naked and visit the imprisoned. May her life continue to be inspiration to others who serve as Ladies of Charity.

Submitted by:

*Viola Johnson-Robinson,
Immediate Past President ADW Board*



Dr. Rita Laverne Robinson

My attendance at Rita Robinson's funeral liturgy on January 18 was a special grace for me. During the course of the liturgy I kept realizing that in Rita I found a likeness to Blessed Rosalie Rendu, a Daughter of Charity who lived during several revolutions in Paris in the 1800s, a time of serious political and social strife, working in one of the most destitute neighbor-hoods of Paris all her life as a Daughter of Charity. In those 51 years Sister Rosalie, along with her community untiringly cared for, fed, visited, con-soled and soothed others. She fought against injustice and poverty, awakened the conscience of those in power or those with money, she worked toward the education of the children and the youth of poor families. She studied the abilities of those she served, their level of instruction and found work to help them out of their difficulties. Rita grew up in South East Washington and chose to remain there. Her roots were there. Her gifts could be used.

Both petite women not only had deep faith in their God but their faith moved them to action, their faith who called them to make a difference. They did this with trust and resourcefulness, courage and freedom. With energy and drive, both lifted people up beyond their expectations.

When I listened to the testimonies given at Rita's funeral liturgy and read the narrative about her in the program at her funeral, I was astounded by the many other avenues of social justice, commitment to education and mentoring the young, challenging others especially the young to be the best they could be in addition to her service as a Lady of Charity. She put her time and determination into everything she did as did Sister Rosalie. They each used their personal gifts of intelligence, creativity, insight and boldness of character.

Blessed Rosalie saw needs and, gifted with a keen sensitivity, she once said; "There is something that is choking me and takes away my appetite... the thought that so many families lack bread..." Sister Rosalie knew what she was called to do (I was hungry and you gave me to eat.) and this conviction grounded her and directed her actions.

That was Rita. She was who she was. She was grounded in her beliefs, comfortable in her own shoes and as a woman of faith compelled to act.

During the liturgy, I recalled the dream Sister Rosalie shared toward the end of her life with Armand de Melun, a friend and collaborator, who later became her first biographer. "One night I dreamed that I stood at the judgment seat of God. God received me with great severity and was about to pronounce my sentence when, suddenly, I was surrounded by an immense crowd of people carrying old boot, shoes, and hats. The crowd of people presented Sister Rosalie's gifts to God saying: She was the one who gave us all these things. Then Jesus Christ turned to-ward me and said: "because you gave all these second-hand clothes in my name, I open Heaven to you. Enter for all eternity.

I suspect that Rita would not have feared that God would have treated her with severity, but I do believe that God said to Rita as she entered the pearly gates: Rita I was hungry and you gave me to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me to drink, I was naked and you clothed me. (Mathew: 25)

Rita, you took the gifts that I gave you and became the first-generation college graduate in your family. You took your education seriously. Through sharing the fruits of your education, you inspired others, mentored others. You raised the standards of education in the schools you administered and taught other teachers and counselors to do the same. You taught young people to believe in themselves and to use the gifts that God gave to them.

You used your influence in political, social, and cultural circles. Come, Rita, let's celebrate with all other likeminded people who are now receiving their reward in heaven. And by the way, I want to introduce you to Sister Rosalie Rendu who is up here with Me. She was in so many ways just like you. Come receive your reward.

Blessed Rosalie once said: A Vincentian follower must be like a milestone on a street corner where all those who pass by can rest and lay down their heavy burden. May we, Vincentian followers, also be like milestones on a street corner where all who pass by can lay down their heavy burdens.

I encourage each of you to take some time to determine the gift that Rita personally gave to you. What did you admire in her? What one of her qualities challenges you to be a better Lady of Charity?

Submitted by:
Sr. Claire Debes, D.C.
Vincentian Spiritual Moderator ADW LOC

Dr. Rita L. Robinson will forever be remembered as a member of the Ladies of Charity (LOC) at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Church (OLPH). Rita joined our association in 2002. In 2007, she stepped up in the leadership role as OLPH LOC President serving from 2007-2010. After serving at the unit level for several years, she was asked to join the Archdiocese of Washington (ADW) Ladies of Charity Board of Directors as 1st Vice President in 2010. In 2012, Rita lead the ADW Board as President serving from 2012-2014. She continued in her leadership role with the LOC by serving as the Mid-Atlantic Regional Vice President from

2012-2016 whose position has a seat on the National Board, commonly known as Ladies of Charity of the United States of America (LCUSA). Rita served on several committees for the LCUSA Board, most notably Advocacy Against Human Trafficking; Co-Chair for the 2012 National Assembly held in Washington, DC; and, LCUSA Caregiving Services, Inc.

Aside from being very active in the LOC organization at all levels, Rita was a loyal and active member of OLPH Church all her life. She shared her talents as President of the Parish Council; Evangelization Committee;

Welcoming Home Ministry; OLPH Women's Ministry; Blessed Virgin Mary Sodality; Cursillo Movement; Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion; all while working tirelessly with the Food Pantry; Feeding the Homeless; and, Annual Christmas Project of the OLPH LOC. I'm sure Rita was met with open arms at the Gates of Heaven by Our Lord and Savior for all her shared time, talent and treasure done in HIS name. May her soul rest in eternal peace.

Submitted by: Toni K. Gaines



Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Church





Ladies of Charity

Servicette, LCUSA Service Center
2816 E. 23rd St.
Kansas City, MO 64127
Address Service Requested

AIC USA

aic.ladiesofcharity.us

"TO SERVE RATHER THAN TO BE SERVED"

17TH CENTURY WORK OF THE LADIES OF CHARITY, HOME FOR ABANDONED BABIES PART 2

Carol Schumer, D.C.

Given the overwhelming problem, the increasing number and the massive cost of caring for the discarded children of the 1600s, called the foundlings, Vincent resorted to his shrewd rhetoric to convince the Ladies to take on full responsibility for these infants. His method consisted in laying out the dire need for this ministry, then adding "You did not feed them, [and so] you killed them."¹ He continued pointing out that "these poor children have been disowned by their father and mother"² and "[are] sold ... to beggars who break their arms and legs to arouse pity so the people give them alms and then let them die of hunger."³ Concluding, Vincent stated, "Ladies, you are obliged in conscience to assist them ... because you are their mothers."⁴

In truth, Vincent prayed and reflected for two years before initiating this effort. In the beginning, the work was very modest with only two or three children involved. Cow's milk was used to feed them. Quickly, the number grew to twelve with four wet nurses assisting. This trial brought good results. "Consequently, in 1640, the Ladies decided to accept all the foundlings brought to them."⁵

In 1647, King Louis XIV gave Vincent, Bicêtre, a huge, vacant, rambling castle built to house disabled military, outside Paris, for this ministry. Louise de Marillac was very concerned and described the place as "the haunt, by day and night, of all sorts of evil persons."⁶ In question of Vincent's plan to bring the babies there, she voiced nine practical difficulties to doing so.⁷ Her major concern was the immense cost of renovating and maintaining its use. Vincent countered each objection, insisting "we must trust in God and do what we can."⁸ Louise conceded, after listed detailed requirements for

this ministry with the infants, i.e., "two men ... chosen very carefully ... to live there; ... daily Mass in the chapel; ... a little horse-drawn cart for transporting the children ..."⁹ As a result, all consented. Vincent noted, "... we've agreed only to try this out and, if the burden is too great, we'll ask to be released from it."¹⁰

That same year, with the help of the Daughters of Charity and the support of the Ladies, the weaned babies were taken to Bicêtre. From the start, the arrangement was problematic. The building was cold and drafty. Supplies were scarce and illness was rampant. Thus, in 1651, the environment was deemed harmful to the children's health and all returned to Paris.¹¹ The well-being of the children was the #1 priority!

This service with the foundlings commenced the three-century, Vincentian commitment to the care of newborn, abandoned, parent-less, needy infants and youth. What a legacy is ours!



Reflection: *Vincent used persuasive words and guilt to garner the help he needed. What do I use?*

How am I called to care for children who are marginalized and living in poverty?

References: Keim, Janet, D.C., material from project entitled "The Work of the Foundlings with the Ladies of Charity"

1 Coste, Correspondence, volume 13b, #195 Vincent to the Ladies, [between 1640-50], page 421

2 Coste, volume 13b, #190, General Meeting on the Works of the Hôtel-Dieu and of the Foundlings, April 1640, page 405

3 Ibid. #195, page 421

4 Ibid. #195, page 422

5 Coste, volume 1, #288, Vincent to Louise, footnote page 407

6 Ibid. volume 2, #770 August 19, [1642-45] Louise to Vincent, page 596

7 Ibid. #195, page 421

8 Ibid. #189 January 12, 1640, page 407

9 Ibid. #770, page 597

10 Ibid. #189, page 407

11 Ibid. #288, page 407