

LADIES OF CHARITY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

VOL. 63 NO. 2 WINTER 2023

SERVICETTE

TO SERVE RATHER THAN BE SERVED



AIC USA

NATIONAL
ASSEMBLY
HIGHLIGHTS!
PAGE 5



"YOU WILL FIND OUT THAT CHARITY IS A HEAVY BURDEN TO CARRY, HEAVIER THAN THE KETTLE OF SOUP AND THE FULL BASKET. BUT YOU WILL KEEP YOUR GENTLENESS AND YOUR SMILE. IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO GIVE SOUP AND BREAD. THIS THE RICH CAN DO. YOU ARE THE SERVANT OF THE POOR, ALWAYS SMILING AND GOOD-HUMORED. THEY ARE YOUR MASTERS, TERRIBLY SENSITIVE AND EXACTING MASTER YOU WILL SEE..." ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

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

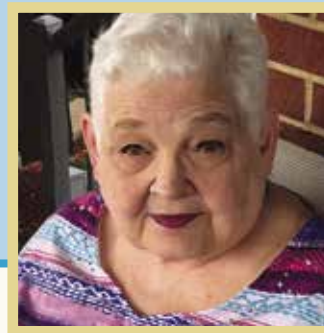
The deadline to submit articles and photos for the next issue of the **SERVICETTE**:

Due date for submission of articles for the next issue is April 20, 2023. 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

By Peggy Keene, LCUSA President



December 6, 2022

Dear Friends:

It has been a great honor serving as your LCUSA President these past two years. This chapter of my life has given me so many unique experiences and adventures. I have become acquainted with so many new Ladies of Charity, worked with wonderfully talented and gifted women, and learned so much more about the Ladies of Charity mission.

Being able to lead this group out of the Pandemic that stifled us for two years was one of my adventures, and only by the grace of God and the help of all you ladies across this entire United States, have we been able to land back on our feet and move forward to be stronger than we have ever been.

My thanks and gratitude for the support and guidance given to me by Father Richard Gielow and Sister Claire Debes. These two people are such a gift to our organization.

Sister is retiring, but her heart will always be with us, and I'm sure we will be gifted again with our new Spiritual Moderator who has yet to be announced.

The LCUSA board I have been blessed to work with are the greatest! Always willing to jump in and help at a minute's notice. Being able to meet again face to face again was such a joy, and the work accomplished at our two meetings was phenomenal.

Meeting, seeing you virtually, and chatting by e-mails and phone calls, almost on a daily basis, has made me feel like we have been friends forever. Know that if I can be of assistance to any of you out in the LCUSA membership, just reach out. You will be able to get in touch with me via the LCUSA office and e-mail.

You will be in good hands with our new LCUSA president Holly Walter. She is a devout, loving woman, who also loves being a Lady of Charity, and is committed to leading all of you forward in continuing the vision and mission of our founder St. Vincent de Paul.

Everything does not always go as smooth as we would like, we all make mistakes and have little bumps in the road, but let us be positive as we move into 2023 that we will all continue to pray, love, laugh and seriously continue seeing the face of Jesus in all who we serve always with humility, simplicity, and charity.

Looking forward to seeing all of you at the 2023 National Assembly in Buffalo, NY.

In the Spirit of St. Vincent de Paul, St. Louise de Marillac & St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

Peggy Keene
LCUSA President



"SEEING CHRIST IN THE FACES OF THOSE WE SERVE"

By The Most Reverend David A. Zubic

One of many reasons I love the Ladies of Charity is the example that you set of following Jesus. You go into the highways and byways to

reach the poor, wounded and marginalized. You do your good deeds so quietly that God alone sees them. And you see Jesus in the faces of those whom you serve.

Jesus spoke about the necessity of seeing Him in the faces of those who are despised and suffering. This isn't a mere option. Our salvation depends on it.

In Matthew 25, Jesus explained that, as God makes his final judgment, He will look at whether we have put Him first as we go about our lives. He will consider how we have used the gifts He has given us to build His kingdom. And, in particular, He will look at whether we have served Him in his guise among the poor, the immigrants, the prisoners and those who are hungry, thirsty and cold.

God will welcome into the eternal kingdom those who have cared for Him: *"For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink; I was a stranger and you welcomed me; I was naked and you clothed me; I was ill and you took care of me; I was in prison and you came to visit me"* (Mt. 10:35-36).

But those whom He declared blessed were puzzled, asking when they had done this. Jesus replied that when they offered such help to "the least of these brothers of mine" they had done it for Him.

How interesting that the true followers of Jesus had no idea that He was the person in the jail, or the refugee center. They didn't know that it was Him under the bridge when they brought food. No golden halo marks only some of the poor and marginalized as Jesus.

Jesus is present in all who suffer because He knows what it is to suffer. He knows what it is to be despised and rejected, to need someone to help Him carry his burden. The One who was crucified with convicts—and promised one of them paradise—doesn't ask whether you are helping so-called "good people" or "bad people." No one is worthy of His love, yet he freely gives it and expects us to pass it to others.

This is what the Ladies of Charity do. You know that there is no such thing as an unwanted child, because God wants and loves all of us. You know that there is no such thing as an "illegal" person, because God's love knows no borders. You know that criminals are children of God and brothers and sisters to Jesus, even if they have lost their way. You know that the poor are not to be despised, that they can teach us much about what it means to be totally dependent upon God.

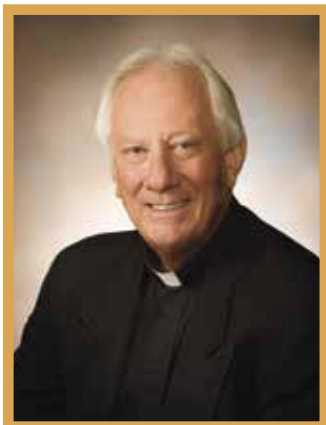
My dear Ladies of Charity, continue to see Christ in the faces of those you serve, especially when they are badly scarred or hidden under a mask. And the King will say to you, "Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Mt. 10:34).



**DON'T FORGET TO VISIT OUR
WEBSITE FOR THE LATEST NEWS AT
AIC.LADIESOFCHARITY.US**

Greetings Ladies FROM THE HEARTLAND.

By Fr. Richard Gielow, C.M.



Rev. Richard Gielow, CM
LCUSA Spiritual Advisor

ASSEMBLY 2022

The Ladies of Charity did it again!!! Just amazing. The Knoxville ladies of charity graciously hosted this years National Assembly, and provided us with a real gift and blessing. For those who attended you know what I mean and for those who didn't I'm sorry you missed this wonderful event.

Southern hospitality was truly evident from beginning to end. The speakers, workshops, Masses, sharing, praying and dining all contributed to a true Vincentian event. But the best part of the assembly was the opportunity to reunite, visit, share, laugh, dine together, learn and encourage one another to go back home and let everyone see the joy and beauty of being a Lady of Charity.

I strongly encourage you to commit to next year's assembly in Buffalo, N.Y. It will begin with a special day of prayer for the Ladies. A trip to Niagara Falls, and it will end once again with a deeper love of Christ ... the Vincentian Family and the ministry the Ladies are called to do.

Please shuffle off to Buffalo next year.

God bless,
Fr. Gielow, C.M.

Farewell SISTER CLAIRE DEBES ON YOUR RETIREMENT *We Will Miss You!*

How blessed I feel for having worked with and among so many of you. I have truly been inspired by your dedication and your energy to serve those living on the edges of society in a diversity of ways.

You have motivated me to foster my relationship with Jesus as he identified with those who lived on the edges as a Daughter of Charity and as a member of the Vincentian Family. I love our charism and loved working with the LCUSA Spirituality Committee of the Board providing formation materials, and the Vincentian Spiritual Moderator program. I pray that all of you will be committed to this formation to assure that this charism will live into the future.

I think it is just under 20 years that I have served on the Board before and after my term (2007-2011) as Provincial/Visitatrix for the then Emmitsburg Province of the Daughters of Charity. Before my role of formator, I had both taught and then served as principals of Catholic schools, giving me a strong foundation for my work with the Ladies of Charity.

St. Louise had a great love for the passion of Jesus Christ crucified, and it was that love that brought her in communion with all those crucified people for whom He died. My hope as I leave the Board is that each member throughout the country will truly take time to contemplate this same Jesus and do all in your power personally, and as a group to serve the many oppressed and wounded people of our country, and our world today in whatever way it is possible. Thank you all for the pleasure of working with you over these past years, and I will miss you all!



AFTER TWO YEARS OF WAITING, THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY WAS HELD IN KNOXVILLE

By Chris Young

Knoxville – The Knoxville Ladies of Charity hosted the Ladies of Charity of the United States of America (LCUSA) National Assembly Aug. 26-27, in Knoxville, Tenn., after the Coronavirus Pandemic prevented the scheduled event in 2021. They welcomed about 110 women from five regions throughout the U.S. to the themed Assembly, “Seeing Christ in the Faces of Those We Serve.” The Ladies of Charity listened to speakers, shared in table discussions, and prayed together during Masses.

“Lord it is good for us to be here,” said Fr. Richard Gielow, C.M., LCUSA Spiritual Advisor, during the opening Mass after referring to the cancelation in 2021. “I share that with you today because we have endured a minor plague in the past. There is no better way to start your Assembly than with the Eucharist, which is to give thanks. “It is privilege and an honor to be a Lady of Charity; it’s an incredible gift from God. The Lord knows who the Ladies of Charity are, and Vincent and Louise know who the Ladies of Charity are.”

The Most Rev. Bishop Richard F. Stika, of the Diocese of Knoxville, in an introduction to his talk said, “The work the Ladies of Charity do is most important because the Ladies of Charity are the face of Jesus, the hands of Jesus, the person of Jesus, and the heart of Jesus.” It is the witness that you give as followers of Jesus, of goodness and faith, who have a desire to share that faith with others, that is important, he said.

It is like when Mother Theresa was trying to help a woman in the street, and the woman started to scream telling Mother Theresa to get away from her. Mother Theresa told the woman she just wanted to help her, Bishop Stika said. The woman thought someone connected with the Catholic religion would taint her in some way, or that Mother Theresa would try to convert her. Mother Theresa said ‘I just want to help you.’ And the woman asked her ‘Why do you want to help me?’ the bishop said. Mother Theresa told her because, ‘My God demands it,’ and asked the woman, ‘What is the name of your God?’

“Mohamed,” the woman replied, said the Bishop.

“That is why I want to thank you all for being here today and honoring this city here in Eastern Tennessee,” Bishop

Stika said. “Thank you for all you do, but especially for being the heart of Jesus.”

Natalea Cummings, president of the Knoxville Ladies of Charity, welcomed the Ladies of Charity present at the Assembly and said, “I think it is so awesome to see this come together with all the things we couldn’t control. It’s awesome that we are all here together and we can share and learn together. Knoxville is just a really cool city and I hope you enjoy your stay here.”

The first plenary speaker was Fr. Ragan Shriver, who gave a talk on, “Widening the Frame: Expanding perspectives

on the impact of poverty.” Fr. Ragan is an Associate Professor of Practice at the University of Tennessee, College of Social Work, as well as the Director of the MSSW Program Knoxville Campus, and chair of the Forensic Social Work Certificate Program.

“Who are our clients and what is going on with them,” said Fr. Ragan in beginning his talk. “We always look at their strengths. For example, a child missed three days of school. Why did he miss those three days, or what got him there those two days,” he asked. “The frame work starts with the neuron. So many things are going on around the neuron, he said. The brain is still developing and growing as children and at different age levels. The brain continues to develop new neurons as we age.

“There is a process called the pruning and growing process, and that is where we get those habits we engage in. So when they are reinforced in positive environments, they get stronger,” he said. “But for many of the clients we serve, because they live in poverty, or grew up in trauma, violence, abusive situations, or in foster homes, wondering where their next meal is going to come from, or if they are going to have to spend the night in the car, those neurons that have not been pruned out are the stress response neurons. They are the neurons that develop negative behaviors and they get stronger and stronger and become much more difficult to change or alter and develop into a disruptive neuronal pattern. We wonder why do they keep making the same mistakes, or doing the same behaviors. It is because the human brain has adapted to a maladapted pattern.



Bishop Stika

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Fr. Ragan said sometimes when we feel bad, we want to engage in the things that make us feel better, which are sometimes bad for us such as drinking, smoking, drugs, bad relationships, and those kinds of things. Often a person will feel better in the moment if they can just get a hit of a drug, or a drink of alcohol, and that is the adoption of the health risk behaviors that therefore make them sick or lead to an early death. From this we can see that the people we are dealing with are at risk, their lives are at risk. What the Ladies of Charity are doing are pro-life at relieving some of these stages along the way.

If they are worried and have learned that they are not going to get their next meal, then they are going to get anxious around food because their brains are telling them that there is stress around food, Fr. Ragan said. That increases their heart rate and causes a lot of anxiety. When people come to our food pantries, they get a little anxious around food access, or do things that are disruptive because of being deprived of something such as food.

There is hope, Fr. Ragan said. The interaction that the Ladies of Charity have with the clients, the food, the resources we provide, help to make the reorienting of the brain. "God is still breathing life into the neurons in our brains; God is recreating us each day with these new neurons. You are helping create a new life with the work that you do just by being present, and welcoming; you empower them and give them dignity."

The Ladies of Charity then had the opportunity to hear a Junior Ladies of Charity table discussion led by Nancy Bianculli, LCUSA Board representative for the Junior Ladies of Charity. "The Junior Ladies of Charity want to work with the poor," said Bianculli. "In 2016, I use to say the Juniors are our future, but now I realize we are their future, and we need to get them before we lose them. All you need is three girls to start a Junior group, and once you start it, they are going to decide what it is they want to do once they meet. The only disadvantage is they graduate from high school and move on. But what we need to do is get the younger 7th and 8th graders through high school to become Ladies of Charity before they graduate and move on.

"I've talked about having them start college level Ladies of Charity groups," Bianculli said. "There are college level people who are living in their cars; they have no food. The colleges have food pantries for these students. But I'm being told we should go to the graduate level to start

the junior groups," she said. The 2023 Assembly will be in Buffalo, New York, and the junior group will be invited.

On the second day in line with the theme of the Assembly, "Seeing Jesus in the Face of Those we Serve," Spiritual Moderators for LCUSA Sr. Grace Hartzog, SC, and Sr. Claire Debes, DC, led the morning Prayer Service.

"Loving God, as Ladies of Charity, we gather together to celebrate our call to follow You, as we open ourselves to a 2022 vision to see Christ in the faces of all whom we serve.

We embrace our call as holy, our ministry as a gift, and our challenges as blessings. We as members with a common Vincentian mission of seeing Christ in all whom we serve, living the gospel message together, we thank you for calling us, and we are grateful as we recognize our diversity and many gifts.

The Ladies of Charity then sat quietly and reflected on their call to serve. "We have been chosen by God as instruments of God's boundless and abundant love, which desires to be established and to replenish souls," Sr. Claire read.

"As we continue to gather, we ask our loving God to help us to listen to the call that the Holy Spirit, Vincent, Louise, and Elizabeth Ann invite us to: That we first recognize that in order to serve in their names, we must personally and communally change so we pray that we might transform our hearts and come into deeper relationships with Jesus. ...

Loving God, in the invitation for Synodality, Pope Francis challenged us "not to produce documents, but to plant dreams, draw forth prophecies and visions, allow hope to be nourished, inspire trust, bind up wounds, weave together relationships, awaken a dawn of hope, learn from one another, and create a bright resourcefulness that will enlighten

minds, warm hearts, and give strength to our hands." We ask you to give us this vision, and always see Christ in the faces of those we serve. Amen.

Following the prayer service, Plenary Speaker Charles A. Levesque, J.D., president and executive director, DePaul USA, gave a talk on "DePaul USA: A Vincentian Response to Homelessness in America."

DePaul USA is in eight states from New York to California. "I don't think I'm very good at always seeing the face of Jesus in the people we serve, so my hat is off to those who do," said Levesque. "And, I don't think you can do that unless you build a Vincentian organization, and deliver services in a Vincentian way. I want to focus on how we are trying to build both a Vincentian organization and a Vincentian response to the issue of homelessness.



Fr. Ragan Shriver



Nancy Bianculli discussing Jr. Ladies of Charity

"DePaul USA's goal is to end homelessness and to improve or change the lives of the men, women, and now young people who are impacted by homelessness," said Levesque. "We are a national organization, non-profit, and we are involved with a parent organization that started in London nearly four years ago; there are DePaul subsidiaries throughout Europe and the United States."

Levesque said DePaul USA follows the works of Saints Vincent and Louise, and follows four strategies: 1) Invest in Vincentian Values training, 2) Collaborate with other members of the Vincentian Family, 3) Create a "work home" for Vincentian professionals, 4) Deliver services consistent with Vincentian Values. Treat everyone with dignity and respect.

DePaul USA tries to do four things to help people overcome homelessness. The first is the Day Centers located in four states: Arkansas, California, Georgia and New York; where clients are able to wash clothes, shower, work with a case manager, get food, and take steps to transition into housing and gain dignity and independence.

The second thing is to help people improve their health. In Macon, Georgia there is a health clinic. In Philadelphia there is the first medical respite for homeless men, said Levesque. When they leave the hospital they go there to recover instead of back on the street, and they are helped to find housing. "We also raised \$1 million, and have broken ground to build a respite in Macon to house 11 men and women, who are recovering," Levesque said.

The third thing "we do is try to help people obtain employment so they can get into housing, receive their entitled benefits, pay rent and have some income," he said.

The fourth thing is to help them obtain and sustain housing, he said.

Levesque said they have about 20 programs in eight cities across the country, serve about 3,200 people, have helped about 500 people obtain employment or access benefits, have helped 220 people move to permanent housing, and have helped many more people move to shelters.

"It is such a struggle to get people to move to permanent housing, many are resistant to moving to permanent housing," said Levesque. "Working with the homeless is mostly men, but there are also some women with children. There are also about 58,000 homeless college students that we have worked with by placing them in host homes, said Levesque. "We aired this program and someone saw it, and a donor gave us a \$1 million donation to house these students; we want to grow it some more across the

country," he said. ... "We are trying in all of our cities to acquire housing, particularly in cities where rent and prices are going up so we can preserve housing."

Also a plenary speaker, Rev. Patrick J. Griffin, C.M., executive director of the Vincentian Center for Church and Society, St. John's University, Queens, NY, gave a talk on "Being Vincent DePaul: A Primer."

Christ began by doing and then by teaching." Be a doer and as you learn to do what you do, then write it down and begin to teach others how to do it, Fr. Griffin said. If the rules of the Congregation of the Mission were lost, all one would have to do is follow a Vincentian around for a day, do what they did and write it down, and the rules, the constitutions would be written. It's true for the priests, the Daughters of Charity and the Ladies of Charity. Then allow that to teach us the ways we can teach it differently, and then pass it on to those who come after us, he said.

"I'm honored today to speak about something that is important for my own life ministry – a deep belief in the incarnation of Christ, and an ability to be creative; this is important for my own life ministry and my embrace of the Vincentian charism," Fr. Griffin said. "After some serious reflection, I decided to make this about Vincent de Paul – A conspiracy of women – in getting things done."

He settled on, Why he couldn't be Vincent de Paul or many other people; they come from a different world to where he could only step back and wonder. "I'm not even jealous of their gifts. Clearly I can't be a host of people because they contest many talents. "I can only step back and admire," he said. "But what about Vincent de Paul? Is there something about him that immediately eliminates the possibility that I could be like him. That I could be him. The question stimulates my mind and heart. And, I invite you to allow yourself to be stimulated by that same question. What a gift Vincent would be for our world and our time. Why can't someone like you or me stand up and take on his role as a leader in the Christian community? As a first responder for the needs of our world's people?

"Let us consider the gifts of Vincent de Paul, and the ministry he brought to his time and place," said Fr. Griffin. "How was his vision so acute as to recognize Christ in so many sisters and brothers? You might even say, 'I could be Vincent de Paul, and in this time, in this place, in this world.'"

Four elements describe how this could be true, he said. They are as follows: Vincent de Paul – A Primer: 1) Belief in



Charles Levesque



Fr. Griffin

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the incarnation of Christ, 2) Willingness to be converted, 3) Desire to be collaborative, and 4) Ability to be creative.

"I want to remind us about the spirit alive in him," Fr. Griffin continued. "The directive of the Ladies of Charity - To serve rather than to be served. We must take to heart the teaching of the incarnation. At the heart of Vincent de Paul was Christ Jesus".

The second point - Conversion, "Vincent was able to learn the mind of God and allowed himself to be changed," he said. "The goodness of his people, obedient to what he told them, captured Vincent's heart and he found Christ among them. He was converted as he found the service of the poor", he said. To be Vincent de Paul, ongoing conversion needs to be a part of our life as well, and it opens our eyes to the poor whom we choose to serve.

"Thirdly, a desire to be collaborative - We might imagine Louise de Marillac or others. Vincent was converted by the women in his life. Vincent treated women well, and he learned from their skills. Vincent's first foundation was the Ladies of Charity [in 1617] to serve the needs of the family who was ill. Then working with Marguerite Naseau he formed the Daughters of Charity [in 1633].

"Fourth, an ability to be creative - The Daughters of Charity took vows every year and were able to come and go in a creative way and be cloistered at the same time," said Fr. Griffin. "Vincent and Louise promoted catechesis for the children and adults to learn their faith, so they weren't attracted to other faiths - the importance of education for the immigrants."

Conclusion - First, put your faith in Christ who lives among us and still abides among us, 2) Open yourselves to the conversion that the lessons of each day embody, 3) Join in with others who think and work similarly, 4) Seek creativity in recognizing and responding to the needs of our time.

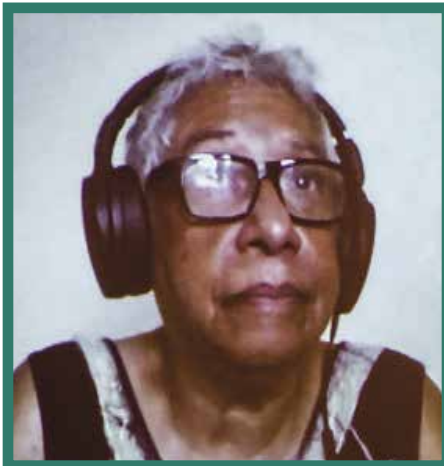
"We can't be Vincent de Paul because he was who he is, but we can be who we are using the gifts that God has given us and the care of our brothers and sisters, and recognizing in them the presence of Jesus Christ," said Fr. Griffin.

The last plenary speaker was Sandy Figueroa, A.A.S, B.S., M.S., Co-Chair of the Sisters of Charity Voting and Anti-Racism Committee, and a member of the VinFam North American Social Justice Committee. She gave a talk on, "Who is My Neighbor? Systemic Racism and Our Response."

"I am thrilled to be here with you as a zoom presentation. I am a member of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, so I have a strong Vincentian charism, and I am glad to share our charism of seeing Jesus in the face of each person," she said.

Figueroa identifies racially as an African American or black woman; her mother was black, and her parents were from St. Thomas and Trinidad. Her father was from Puerto Rico, where she gets her last name, she said.

"The Lord asks of you to act justly, love more tenderly and walk humbly with our God, she said. "Who is my neighbor," she asked, from the scripture of the Good Samaritan. "Which of these three was the neighbor of the victim? Who are we in the charism of charity? Aren't we all moved with compassion in helping those who come to our pantries, she said. We take them into our own hearts. This is what you do. What else can we do?" she asked.



Sandy Figueroa

"In this parable Jesus does not offer alternatives, according to a reflection by Pope Francis in the Good Samaritan parable. He said the person needing help was a Jew and a Samaritan who helped him. Jesus trusts in the human spirit. The Samaritan went the extra mile to help the Jew; the next day he returns and gives the Inn keeper two silver coins to pay for his expenses. In this parable Jesus trusts in the best of the human spirit, and encourages us to persevere in love, to restore dignity to the suffering and to build a society worthy of the name. The guarantee of an authentic openness to God on the other hand, is a way of practicing the faith that helps open our hearts to our brothers and sisters."

Like the chance traveler in the parable, we need only to have a pure and simple desire to be a people, a community, constant and tireless in the effort to include, integrate and lift up the fallen, said Figueroa.

Martin Luther King's reflection of the Good Samaritan was a Levite asking, "If I stop to help this man, what will happen to me?" Then the Good Samaritan came by and reversed the question, "If I do not stop and help this man, what will happen to him?"

"We have the opportunity to make America a better nation, brothers and sisters," said Figueroa. "Each of us in this room are doing what we need to do to make America a better nation. Let's take a look at what will happen if we don't stop to help? That is the challenge before us.

"We are so familiar with the parable of the Good Samaritan - What is stirring in you? What question do you have?"

Figueroa asked the audience what is the difference between the words prejudice, discrimination, and racism? She said prejudice is prejudging. We are proud to be certain nationalities. "If I say I'm staying with my own kind, I'm afraid to reach out to another nationality." An example, nobody is as good as an Italian for instance, so that is discriminating.

Figueroa gave an example of a basketball team in her neighborhood that is all black, the majority is Haitian. Another school district predominantly white, act on their superiority and make the black students feel uncomfortable by making them feel they could never measure up.

Racism makes us see the other with suspicion or to attribute negative characteristics to an entire group of people. Systemic racism is prejudice/discrimination plus social power and legal authority.

Figueroa lists 12 points that indicate racism and prejudice.

Land seizures - blacks could have their land seized to pay share cropping debts - 1949-1970.

The National Housing Act of 1934 - laws under this act guaranteed federally backed loans to Whites, and legally refused loans to blacks and anyone else who chose to live in or near black neighborhoods. This practice known as redlining targeted black neighborhoods and identified them as "Grade D." This made it impossible for appraisers to do business in these neighborhoods because they were all considered bad credit risks.

Part 2 of the Housing Act of 1934, since this legislation prevented blacks from federally-backed home mortgages, whites would buy the homes in black neighborhoods and then sell them to blacks at three times the price.

The Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 - Enacted to get

the country out of the Depression, excluded tip-based jobs and other jobs predominantly held by blacks, from this first-ever minimum-wage job. The very policies that were meant to alleviate economic strain were withheld from the black communities.

The Federal G.I. Bill of 1944 - The bill helped veterans get low-cost loans, tuition assistance, and unemployment, but excluded blacks because they did not have collateral and did not qualify.

The Separate but Equal Doctrine was declared unconstitutional in 1954 (Brown vs. Board of Education). American schools are more racially segregated today than any other time in the last four decades. Black students are five times as likely to live in an area of concentrated poverty, underfunded, understaffed and overcrowded schools. This leaves black students with limited education, and leaves them with minimum-wage jobs with little hope.

Starting in 1970 - Subprime loans and continuing today, loans with larger interest rates to black families, regardless of the families income, education, or good credit history. Blacks continue to pay more for their homes of the same value than their white counterparts. (Prejudice can't be a good credit risk) This increases foreclosures rates among blacks and higher food insecurity levels.

The war on drugs initiated in 1971 and continuing today - widened the racial wealth gap and targeted black and brown communities. Although using drugs are comparable across racial lines, blacks are 10 times as likely to be stopped, searched, arrested, prosecuted, and convicted or incarcerated for drug violations as whites. This means that a black family is 10 times as likely to have a family member sent to prison, and 10 times as likely to fall into hunger because of incarceration.

Employment discrimination was legally abolished in 1964 with the Civil Rights Act - racial discrimination continues among all educational levels and job sectors, said Figueroa. The Voting Rights Act passed in 1965 making voting restrictions illegal.

Figueroa asked the audience to reflect on what they expect from the church with regard to Systemic Racism. Also, as an individual, what is my role?

"Racism can only end if we contend with the policies and institutional barriers that perpetuate and preserve the inequality - economic and social - that we still see all around us. With renewed vigor, we call on members of the Body of Christ to join others in advocating and promoting policies at all levels that will combat racism and its effects in our civic and social institutions," said Figueroa.

Following table discussions, the Business Meeting, and the announcement of next year's National Assembly being held in Buffalo, N.Y., President-Elect Holly Walter and Irene



Bishop Stika Closing Mass

Siedlarczyk presented LCUSA National President Peggy Keene with a plaque thanking her for her leadership in 2021-2022, and in recognition of her service and devotion to the national Ladies of Charity, AIC-USA.

That being the end of the Assembly, the women boarded the busses for the closing Mass at the Cathedral of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus in Knoxville. The Mass was celebrated by The Most Rev. Richard F. Stika, Bishop of Knoxville.

In his homily, Bishop Stika reminded the women they were made in the image and likeness of God - "So what is humility?" he asked. "Jesus humbled himself in the form of a man. I really do think that humility is to be grateful for who we are, and to believe that God has placed us on this earth for a purpose. That might take a lifetime to discover," said Bishop Stika. But just think of the power of one person interacting with another person, and that person's life is dramatically changed. Because isn't it true that our lives are interwoven in the eyes of God?"

Bishop Stika then recognized the Ladies of Charity having their national meeting and had them raise their hands. He said the Ladies of Charity was an organization that follows the virtues of St. Vincent de Paul - humility, simplicity and charity. For 400 years - the voice, the eyes, the hands and the heart of Jesus. He said, if you are a woman, and you want to make a difference, and you have the time to repair lives, and a sense of responsibility, there is a Ladies of Charity in this [Knoxville] diocese. In the end of the homily, he said, "In the spirit of humility, let's pray for one

another."

The installation of officers and the presentation of Lay Vincentian Moderator Certificates were handed out during the banquet. Those receiving the certificates were: Karen Brinker, Ann Hayes, and Mary Pat Sullivan. ■



Peggy Keene with her plaque



Spiritual Moderators

There is more information about the National Assembly held in Knoxville such as the breakout sessions on the LCUSA website at <https://aic.ladiesofcharity.us/national-assembly-2022/>

LADIES OF CHARITY OF NORTHERN UTAH CREATE RASPBERRY HOPE SOAP AFTER THE CENTER OF HOPE

By Chris Young

North Salt Lake - Ladies of Charity of Northern Utah treasurer Mary Ellen Dworshak came up with the idea to sell soap for a profit after traveling to Nashville, Tenn., with her husband. They went to a market and came across a gentleman who belonged to a charity much like the Ladies of Charity, who said he could make \$20,000 a year selling soap. Mary Ellen proposed this idea during a general Ladies of Charity meeting more than a year ago, and it was decided they would do it as a fund raiser and as a promotional tool. "If we are successful, we will branch out further into different scents and colors," Dworshak said.

Bev Streba, a Lady of Charity, began doing the research on six different companies

who make soap, and narrowed it down to two, which the association voted on, and they picked a company in Northern Utah, where there is a popular recreational lake

- Bear Lake in Logan, Utah. They wanted to stay local, within Utah. There are wonderful raspberries in Logan during raspberry season, they sell raspberry shakes, fruit stands sell famous Bear Lake raspberries, raspberry jam, and now they have Raspberry Center of Hope, Hope Soap, 4.3 oz bars for \$8 that smell wonderful, and are made with goat's milk. It will make your skin feel silky smooth. *For more information or to purchase soap call Mary Ellen at 801-450-1650 or dworshak21@msn.com. All proceeds go toward Center of Hope Food Pantry.*



Bev Streba

MADAGASCAR

All of the donations we have collected for Madagascar in the past have been sent to them to help repair houses destroyed by the latest Typhoon to hit the impoverished island. We received a wonderful thank you from Rose de Lima, President of AIC, and the hard working people in Madagascar. Now it is time to begin the next donation cycle and renew our support to the people of the nation we have supported for many years with our Twinning Project. Over \$1300.00 was collected at the Assembly in Knoxville Tennessee in August. A good start but we need much more to help the women and children in Madagascar.



**Please be as generous as you
can and send all donations to:**

**LCUSA Service Center
2916 East 23rd Street
Kansas City, Missouri 64127**

Thank You for your generosity. Holly Walter, Madagascar Chair.

LADIES OF CHARITY OF ROMAN CATHOLIC PARISHES OF UNIONTOWN

CELEBRATE 25 YEARS OF MINISTRY CARING FOR THE POOR AND NEEDY OF FAYETTE COUNTY

On Sept. 18, 2022, Father John Sedlak, the former Spiritual Director of the organization, offered Liturgy in St. Mary Nativity Church, Uniontown, in thanksgiving to God and in appreciation for those who continue God's work.

Members, guests, and priests who have served at St. Mary, and friends celebrated following the Mass with a reception and dinner in the St. Mary Nativity Parish Center.

St. Vincent DePaul founded the Ladies of Charity in 17th Century France to take charge of and operate his various good works. Always on watch to relieve suffering wherever it appeared, the Ladies of Charity Associations came to the U.S. in 1857. Today, over 8,000 serve the poor of the U.S., and more than 250,000 continue the ministry in 52 countries of the world.

Prior to the official beginning of the Uniontown Ladies of Charity, devout and dedicated women of St. Mary Parish had recognized and answered the needs of the poor, and found ways means to help. A relative from a parish of the Pittsburgh Diocese suggested following their Ladies of Charity organization. Then Sister Kay Glunk, VSC, missioned to St. Mary Nativity and added her support, suggesting prayer, the best way to start. "God will show the way," she counseled, and God did!

That was August, 1997, Sister Kay Glunk became the Spiritual Moderator and 12 charter members legally established the group, while expanding their love and labor for the poor to their presence as Eucharistic ministers to homebound parishioners, or in nursing facilities. The Ladies of Charity provide consolation and spiritual support to the bereaved; they have been collaborators with the St. Vincent de Paul Conference and its Uniontown Store, as well as the Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers.

Current membership of the Ladies of Charity comes to 34 with several women restricted in activity due to age or infirmity. Their interest and prayerful involvement are inestimable. Throughout the year, the Ladies of Charity coordinate and implement a variety of service activities beneficial to many people. To name a few: volunteering at the annual Memorial Liturgy for deceased parishioners, fund raising for the Mother's Day Baby Shower, assisting needy students at Penn State University Eberly Campus with gas cards and donations to the Food Pantry, and professional clothing for job interviews, volunteering at the St. Vincent dePaul Store, Mt. Macrina Gift Shop,

Gardening as needed on Church property, and Food collections for Thanksgiving Community Action Drive. Gathering of items, display and weekly operation of the Children's Closet has generated interest and is successful. Set up in the former St. Mary Nativity Elementary School, the Children's Closet provides clothing, toys and supplies to families with children and newborn to size 5T at no charge.

The Ladies of Charity of the Roman Catholic Parishes of Uniontown are open to all women who are looking for an organization through which they can offer "time, talent, and treasure" to the least of God's people. For additional information or how to become members of the Ladies of Charity, contact the Parish Office at 724-437-4441. We welcome your prayer and interest. Let us reflect and respond to Matthew 25:40, "Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me."

Original Charter Members: Toni Gasparatz, Mary Jane Glad, Eileen Gmitter, Ann Horvath*, Mary Kubiak, Lorene Kusniar, Betty Merti, Virginia Mihaliak**, Roberta Skovera, Mary Smolley, Agnes Yablunosky, Ann Zahradnik***

(*deceased 2020, **deceased 2022, *** deceased 2007).

2021-2022 Officers of Ladies of Charity
Roberta Skovera, President; Sue Bookshar, Vice President, Treasurer; Sister Jean Augustine, Secretary; Sister Annette Frey, Spiritual Moderator; Gloria Nuccetelli, Spiritual Moderator.



LADIES OF CHARITY OF ST. MARY NATIVITY CHURCH, UNIONTOWN, PA

THE CHILDREN'S CLOSET

There is an appointed time for everything, and a time for every affair under the heavens, (Ecclesiastes 3). These words may have echoed in the hearts of the officers of the Ladies of Charity of St. Mary Nativity Church, Uniontown PA when they discovered incidents from the life of St. Vincent DePaul and St. Louise could be implemented appropriately in this time and place. In the 17th Century France, Vincent and Louise opened a Home for Babies and Toddlers because there was a need; in the 20th Century Uniontown, the Ladies of Charity likewise recognized a need to be addressed. St. Louise, always practical and farsighted had organized their endeavor; Vincent countered with advice: "We must trust in God and do what we can." In each case - 17th Century France or 21st Century Pennsylvania--it seemed to the participants: this is the time to act.

"Trust in God and doing what we can" became a rallying cry of the St. Mary's Ladies of Charity under the leadership of Roberta Skovera and Suzanne Bookshar. For many years, the Ladies of Charity cooperated with the St. Vincent DePaul Conference, Uniontown, PA in direct service to those in poverty. Each year on the weekend of Mothers' Day, the Ladies of Charity collected money donations in St. Mary Nativity Parish to build a Baby Fund, using the proceeds to buy diapers, formulas, cribs and car seats, whatever would be needed by mothers for their babies. Social Workers at St. Vincent DePaul Store notified the Ladies when the supplies were low and with trust in God the Ladies of Charity would replenish what had been requested.

In discussing ways to be of service, Roberta and Suzanne engaged other members, with Susan Palencik taking lead as chairperson and joined by other dedicated members. As they thought and discussed, suddenly a creative suggestion emerged: to investigate using space in St. Mary Parish Center (the former parish school) which is now being used for numerous parish activities. The Ladies of Charity received immediate permission from Father Anthony Klimko, Pastor, to prepare what had been the office of the principal and an adjacent nurse's room.



S. Palencik, B. Morgan and Fr. Tony Klimko

The space is now "The Children's Closet" and the two rooms have been transformed into a charming boutique, with colorful pictures, toys, nursery items, and basic diaper essentials. The Ladies of Charity who volunteered to clean and prepare the space also advertised the project. They brought into the Closet a myriad of new, gently-used clothing for girls and boys in sizes: newborn to 5T, which the volunteers attractively displayed.

We opened for business on December 2nd, 2021 after Father Klimko blessed the rooms and the good work to be accomplished there. The Children's Closet is open every Thursday from 11:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Uniontown has four Roman Catholic Parishes and our Ladies of Charity are represented in each as well as in St. John Byzantine Church. We have accepted generous donations of items and monetary gifts not only to get started but to grow.

At the beginning, we notified public school districts to spread the word among teachers of the Children's Closet, its availability and the desire of the Ladies of Charity to "do what we can." The response has been rewarding. Our local newspaper, The Herald Standard, ran an article on The Children's Closet and also highlighted a third-grade class from Franklin Elementary in Vanderbilt, Fayette County, that donated over



R. Skovera and S. Palencik

Continued next page ►

ST. MARY NATIVITY LADIES OF CHARITY UNIONTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA INSTALLATION OF NEW MEMBERS

The Ladies of Charity was the first of the great foundations of St. Vincent DePaul when he heard of a family living on a farm close by who had become ill and was in dire need. St. Vincent preached about this need and his parishioners responded, but when he visited the family he came up with the idea to assemble several women of the parish to bond together to carry on the good work. He outlined rules, received the approval of the Archbishop and the Ladies of Charity were established (in 1617).

The first association of the Ladies of Charity in the U.S. was created in 1857 in St. Louis with a principal purpose for its members to imitate the Divine Savior in serving people living in poverty. The Ladies of Charity will continue to work for systemic change with those who need a hand up instead of a hand out.

Since their founding, 25 years have passed for the Ladies of Charity of St. Mary Nativity Parish, Uniontown, PA, and they've marked that event with the installation of seven new members. On Sept. 2, 2021, Fr. Anthony

Klimko, Pastor of the Roman Catholic Parishes officiated at the solemn reception ceremony of the following:

Gerry Dorobish, Cathy Gmitter, Lois Martin, Marjorie Noone, Kathy Rishel, Rose Sokol, Rose Traficante.



LOC Uniontown Installation

These candidates had completed the required orientation and were ready to carry on their baptismal commitment to the service of others. They welcomed this special apostolate of charity through personal service and help in the total apostolate of the Church's ministry: the elimination of poverty, working toward being a voice for the voiceless.

We happily welcome them and look forward to two additional women who have begun their study toward membership.

Our installation ceremony concluded with the prayer: *My God, I humbly beg you to make me an instrument of your love; give me the grace of performing all my actions to help my neighbor with charity, humility and simplicity.*

Continued from previous page ►

300 outfits for children. Their teacher, Beth Morgan, has her classes each year participate in a project focused on giving back. It was evident from the enthusiasm shown the day the children delivered their donations that they have learned a priceless lesson in charity from this and other projects. We were thrilled to have these youthful collaborators.

The Ladies of Charity weren't looking to open a Home for Babies and Toddlers but they have definitely realized "...an appointed time for everything. . ." they've found a creative way to assist families and make children happy with clean, serviceable and very pretty clothes. St. Vincent and St. Louise must commend "The Children's Closet" and those who continue to support us for a job well done.



kiva

AND OUR LADIES OF LOURDES SALT LAKE CITY LADIES OF CHARITY

By Lori Donnester

My mother and I were talking about how negative the news is and she told me she wished she heard about good things once in a while. Looking around, I see good things. I'd like to tell you about one of them.

When I first joined the Salt Lake City Ladies of Charity, I heard about various programs to which we donated. One of them was Kiva. I had no idea what that was, but when I dug into it and asked some questions, I was delighted with what I discovered.

Kiva is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that helps fund people through a lending program. You donate to someone, they create their business dream, and they pay you back your money. Ninety-six times out of one hundred the lender is repaid. You can lend money to anyone throughout the world who applies to be considered and approved by the organization.

In 2017, the Our Lady of Lourdes Ladies of Charity decided we wanted to donate to support women's organizations. Carol Huffman, our treasurer chose Kiva. We made our first of many loans, and we've been repaid in every instance. Then we lend again. Since our first advance, we have made 33 loans to women in 14 different countries. A few of our loans have been as small as \$25. With Kiva, you can choose who your money goes to, and Carol usually picks women that don't need too much to complete their project.

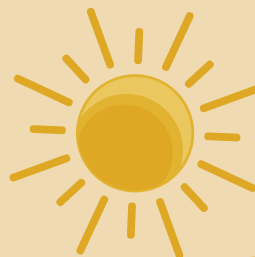
The small amount loaned does so much good.

For example, a woman in Paraguay saved money to open her own grocery store, and through a Kiva loan stocked the shelves. She is now a successful grocery store owner and has paid back the loan. There are many, many stories like that on the Kiva website.

A small loan can do so much good and create a positive story. The ripple effects can drown negativity.



OUR LADY OF LOURDES LADIES OF CHARITY SALT LAKE CITY



Beginning the Summer with Sunshine

By Lori Donnester

At a wedding recently, I heard a guest say that she always stuffs June full of fun to make sure that, by the July 4th, her family has already enjoyed a lot of summer activities before the summer is half over. (Yes, that woman is an incredible person.)

The Salt Lake City chapter of the Ladies of Charity used that philosophy for an all-new fund raiser idea. This year we decided to have a yard sale. When we first talked about it, some concerns were expressed that we most likely wouldn't raise much money. But the other side of the coin was, what if there is another Covid surge in the fall causing our usual indoor fund raiser to be cancelled once again? If that happens, we won't have much money to support our causes, and one of our most important causes is assisting families who don't quite have enough money to support themselves. That's all it took for everyone to be 100 percent on board - Yard Sale it is!

One of our ladies donated her front yard as the location, and the process began. Over a period of three weeks, we gathered gently used items and prepped by pricing, sorting, lugging, and laughing. The big day dawned, and ladies were there early to meet the crowd with donations from a "mink coat" to hand-crafted wall décor. Shoppers were all ages. One 20-something woman said it was the best yard sale she'd ever been to! Another shopper found items to put into backpacks for school-aged children.

Then the clean-up crew did their thing and organized what wasn't sold for donations to local charities. In the end, we made over \$1,300. We gave our goodwill ledger a boost, and we started the summer using the sunshine to make sure we had funds to help others with their rainy days.

Great way to start the summer - not only warm on the outside, but on the inside too.

THE CENTER OF HOPE Celebrates 20 Years OF PROGRESS AND NEW THRIFT STORE

LADIES OF CHARITY OF NORTHERN UTAH CENTER OF HOPE FOOD PANTRY & THRIFT STORE NORTH SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH

By Chris Young

The Ladies of Charity of Northern Utah will celebrate 20 years as an association in 2023. We were established as an association in 2003 in Bountiful under the direction of Daughter of Charity Sr. Charlotte Marie Clark, our Sister Moderator, who founded the Association. She later started a second chapter at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Salt Lake City in 2008. We have come a long way from our early beginnings, and I am one of the original members of this association, who packed food boxes in the driveway of the Daughters of Charity convent using their storage shed to store our canned goods and other food items. This was our temporary food pantry until we could rent a facility -- but it worked! Daughter of Charity Sr. Germaine Sarrazin is now our Sister moderator and Executive Director.

Initially, we would drive Sr. Charlotte's small Dodge truck to the Northern Utah Food Pantry in Ogden, about 30 minutes north of Bountiful, to get a pallet of food. We also gave back our time by sorting bins of canned food items in Ogden at the Food Pantry.

To prepare the supplemental food boxes for the households we served in Ogden and Salt Lake, we would line up boxes in the driveway, and

fill them with the canned food and items, and load them in the back of the truck or Ladies of Charity cars to be delivered. We had various households we each served.

After a while, Sr. Charlotte rented a building in North Salt Lake that had served as the North Salt Lake Post Office. There, we could line up about 30 boxes on a long table and fill them. We continued picking up the food ourselves until we agreed to open as a pantry a few days a month so that the Salt Lake Food Bank would agree to deliver food pallets directly to our pantry. We helped unload the truck, and that made it so much easier for us than going to Ogden to get the food. In this pantry we also collected and gave out household furniture and other household items, as well as mattresses we received free from a Serta Mattress facility.



Center of Hope 2022

Eventually we outgrew that building and found a larger one up the road in about 2010, which is our current location. We recently acquired more space in the back of our building where we now store pallets of food. The

Center of Hope is divided into a Pantry on one side and a Thrift Store on the other. There, we receive two deliveries of food from the Utah Food Bank twice a month, and serve more than 600 people a month. For Thanksgiving this year we served 52 families and gave out turkeys to each family. We get new families each month; in August it was 12, and in September 11.

We have actually outgrown our current facility and have started a capital campaign to try to find a larger facility to more

appropriately accommodate the Pantry and Thrift Store and expand the Thrift Store to carry more items. Currently we are having to turn down donations. Please visit our website at ladiesofcharitynorthernutah.org to learn more about us.

Bobby Earl, our current LOC president, had the dream to one day have a Thrift Store after attending the National Assembly in New Orleans in 2015, and this summer it became a reality. All proceeds from the Thrift Store will support the Center of Hope, which is under the direction of Sr. Germaine and the Daughters of Charity. Once Sr. Germaine retires, the Daughters of Charity will no longer be our sponsor, so the Center of Hope will have to be self-sufficient. As a result, the Ladies of Charity are trying to



LOC 2003

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LADIES OF CHARITY CALVERT COUNTY, MARYLAND

PART OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON LADIES OF CHARITY

Give Thanks to Their Male Volunteers

By Peggy McKelly

Kudos to the LOC Spouses and Friends

The Ladies of Charity Calvert County would like to thank the LOC spouses and friends who tirelessly volunteer in service to our Food Pantry. These men have donated in total thousands of hours over the last couple of years, as we have worked through Covid challenges and facility challenges. Most of our food distribution work is done outside now, (rain or shine), and food and supplies are distributed over four locations due to facility repair issues.

Our regular male volunteers (several LOC spouses) work with us every week pre-packing non-perishable groceries, delivering bread, unloading fresh produce, setting up tables, tents, and signs, sorting and organizing food donations, filling food orders taken by greeters, and loading food in client cars. When something is too heavy, the men are there to help. We served 443 families in 2021, with more than 200,000 pounds of food distributed.

When we needed to move our freezers and refrigerators into a trailer, our LOC spouses were there to do the moving and setup. We needed to move supplies from the Pantry building into an external shed. Then the "She shed" became a temporary office and needed a window. Once again, the LOC spouses were there to help add storage in the shed, move the supplies and install the window.

One of our male friends designed our Food Data Base that now allows us to take client orders on a tablet and print tickets telling volunteers what food items to assemble for each client. He then stayed with the project to help automate related ministries, such as holiday meals, school supplies and Christmas gifts. What a wonderful upgrade from pieces of paper!

When we have Holiday Meal distributions, where we serve hundreds of people in a two-hour period, our local Knights of Columbus also come out to help with traffic control, order taking, and food distribution. We provided holiday meal groceries to 665 families in 2021. We are blessed to have an abundance of help on those days.



LADIES OF CHARITY CAREGIVING ♦2016-2022♦



Success is often measured in duration of existence and profits earned. We achieved neither. But in many ways, we are proud of our accomplishments and hope that our efforts will lead Ladies of Charity USA to look for new and exciting ways to bring Vincentian love and compassionate service to their communities.

Most of you are familiar with our beginnings. The Board of LCUSA created this entity in 2018 after two years of research, deliberation, and prayer. Conceived in anticipation of the 400th anniversary of our founding in 1717 as a means of returning to our roots and answering a great need in the 21st century, the Board's enthusiastic support propelled us into an exciting venture of creating a licensed home care agency to provide Vincentian Care in the home. Vincent asked the first Ladies of Charity in Chatillon to go into the homes of the sick poor and care for them spiritually and corporally. We began to serve in Pittsburgh in late 2018 through our licensed home care agency, credentialed by Medicaid, which offered compassionate care to the elderly and dignity to the workers who cared for them. While the beginnings were difficult, we entered 2020 with great optimism that our model was sound and growth possible.

The Ladies of Charity in Pittsburgh formed an advisory group for this project and worked side by side with our paid staff to help shape our services and to supplement the care with spiritual and social support. Our model incorporated Vincentian mission training. The families for whom we provided care and our workers were very satisfied. So, we thought we had been through the hard part and were ready to grow and develop. However, COVID-19 was an unforeseen obstacle that stalled our progress and disabled our operations, along with over 200,000 small businesses in the United States.

We suspended the Caregiving operation on March 1, 2021. Subsequently, we re-examined and revised the model, had consultants review our practices, surveyed the Ladies in Pittsburgh for other means of serving, and sought out joint venture partners. Unfortunately, after a year of self-examination and seeking other options, we did not see any viable way of resuming operations in this continuing Covid-19 environment and volatile economy. The severe lack of workers

and rising costs in the Pittsburgh area as well as the Kansas City area, which we had begun to develop in early 2020, precluded any hope of a restart. The Board of Caregiving was forced to recommend a final discontinuation of this operation and dissolution of the Corporation to the Board of LCUSA who concurred with that recommendation and voted to dissolve in June, 2022.

We have wrapped up all the loose ends. The date of our corporate dissolution was October 1, 2022. We will file our final tax return, box up the documentation for the archives, and transfer the remaining funds in the bank accounts to LCUSA. We regretfully accept this ending and hope that this enormous effort will inspire future boards and leaders to pursue dreams that will bring the Vincentian spirit to their communities in new and different ways. Perhaps LCUSA will continue to focus on the care needs of the elderly and their families and use our experience and all of the materials that we developed to offer friendly and spiritual visiting services and support to both family caregivers and care workers. Perhaps our Associations will become more involved in the issues that face low-wage workers and develop training and supportive employment programs. The needs are endless. The solutions require the "Love that is creative unto infinity," as Vincent said.

What must be done? What can be done? That is the Vincentian question that we continually must ask ourselves. We stand proud of our accomplishments: building an excellent model of home care, supporting families and workers, training our staff with the Vincentian charism, reaching out to form a national Board of Directors with expertise and commitment to our dream, raising substantial funds to launch this project through grants and donations, growing our network, learning something new each day, and most importantly, deepening our prayer as we rode the crest of success and the pain of having to close our operation. Our hope is that we will be propelled by this venture to continue to listen to the needs of the poor to discern our "calling" in each time and place we find ourselves.

***By MaryAnn Dantuono Past President LCUSA,
2015-2016, Chair of Ladies of Charity Caregiving,
Inc. 2020-2022***



With sadness, your prayers are asked for the repose of the soul of Sister Frances Ryan, D.C. who died August 29, 2022 at Seton Residence in Evansville, Indiana. Sister Fran worked for many years with the Ladies of Charity at the national level. The LCUSA Board of Directors offer their condolences and prayers, joined by all the Ladies of Charity. May she know fullness of life in God.

Daughter of Charity Sister Frances Ryan



OBITUARY

Sister Frances (Loretta Catherine) Ryan died on August 29, 2022 at Seton Residence in Evansville, Indiana. Sister was born on November 30, 1937 and was one of five children of Timothy Joseph and Margaret Frances (Healey) Ryan. She graduated from Alvernia High School in Chicago, Illinois and entered the Daughters of Charity in St. Louis, Missouri in 1956. After initial formation, Sister Frances served as a social worker at Guardian Angel Settlement in St. Louis, Missouri, Catholic Charities in Covington, Kentucky, Seton Home Health in London, Kentucky, St. Vincent's Day Care Center in Evansville, Indiana and St. Vincent de Paul Center in Chicago, Illinois. Sister received a B.A. in Education from Marillac College in St. Louis, Missouri, an MSW in Social Work from St. Louis University in Missouri and a PhD in Counseling and Psychology from Loyola University in Chicago, Illinois. Sister also completed a research project at St. Mary's Medical Center in Saginaw, Michigan and served as a Parish Administrator in the Diocese of Jackson, Mississippi. Sister Frances was a Professor at DePaul University in Chicago from 1981 until 2001 and then served as Moderator of the Ladies of Charity. In 2015, Sister came to Seton Residence to serve in the Ministry of Prayer. A Wake Service will be held at 9:30 a.m. on Friday, September 2, 2022 in the Seton Residence Chapel followed by the Mass of Christian Burial at 11:00 a.m. Burial will be in St. Joseph Cemetery. Sister was preceded in death by her parents and is survived by her brothers Timothy and Frank Ryan and her sisters Margaret Hoyt and Maureen Dondanville, nieces and nephews, her Sisters in Community and many friends. Donations may be made to the Daughters of Charity, 4330 Olive Street, St. Louis, MO 63108. Condolences may be made online at www.ziemerfuneralhome.com.

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find additional ways to support the Center of Hope and the Thrift Store is one way we hope to do just that.

On May 11, the Ladies of Charity hosted an open house for the Thrift Store, which opened on July 2, and during the celebration, Father Andrzej Skrzypiec, pastor of St. Olaf Parish, blessed the expanded Center of Hope. Among the guests were members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints' Davis County Utah Communications Council, which helps support the Food Pantry with donations. Members of the council also raise money for the food pantry and bring items from the LDS Church's Bishop's Storehouse to the Ladies of Charity Fill the Fridge program for those in need.

"We do this because we are serving Christ in those who need our assistance; therefore, it's not a job, it's a ministry," said Sr. Germaine during the open house. "There are many groups who assist us including St. Olaf Council of Catholic Women, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Performance Automotive Group, who is currently paying our rent thanks to Patricia Byrne, and others who randomly drop off donations.

John Hollingshead, the council's director, said usually when they donate they go through Catholic Charities, but "We love what is going on here."



Center of Hope, Sr. with Layette

Chad and Susie Gardner, members of the council, help organize the volunteers from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. They pick up food and supplies from the Bishop's Storehouse to deliver to the Center of Hope. The Ladies of Charity also participate in picking up food from the Bishop's Storehouse for the Fill the Fridge program.

Chad Gardner also arranged a \$20,000 grant so the Center of Hope could receive eggs, milk, cheese, fruit, and extra supplies such as diapers, which are in great demand.

"We always have extra items and fresh food every week," said Chad. "We pick up the extra food from Dick's Market and then your ladies and our volunteers pick it up from us. This grant makes it so on any given week we have extra."

"You guys couldn't be kinder," said Susie. "You will have to let us know what you need."

The Ladies of Charity do what they can to enhance the quality of life for people who are on the brink of having basically nothing. If they supplement families with food, hopefully those in need can pay bills and eat during the week.

LOUISE DE MARILLAC

AND THE CONFRATERNITIES OF CHARITY

Carol Schumer, D.C.

After years of waiting, in May 1629, Louise de Marillac was finally invited by Vincent de Paul to assist in his ministries. He entrusted to her the task of revitalizing and reorganizing the Confraternities of Charity, the first Ladies of Charity, which were scattered across the countryside of France. Vincent wrote to Louise simply, "Father de Gondi sent me word to come by coach to see him in Montmirail. ... Do you feel like coming, Mademoiselle?"¹ Thus initiated life-changing events in Louise's life which transpired over the next 35 years. The impact continues to be felt in the Vincentian Family today.

Once Louise began this ministry, she learned quickly of the difficulties being experienced by the charities. She employed wise, effective strategies as she accompanied them. When she arrived in a town, Louise would gather all the members of the Confraternity and listened carefully to the report of their work and of their challenges. By asking specific, direct questions, she enhanced her knowledge of the situation. Then she was ready to begin her creative, innovative re-organization. Louise always began by praising the good things happening. Only then did she offer correction. Next, she focused on any particular problems. Not content with simply making recommendations to the members of the Confraternities, Louise chose to show them by putting her suggestions into practice, i.e., for a few days she would take on the duties of the Superior/President, then those of the Treasurer and finally, those of the person visiting the sick. Through hands-on, simple tasks, i.e., providing food, giving clothing and medications as needed and providing hospitality, Louise involved herself in the day-to-day efforts of the women. In this way, everyone had a living example for their ministry as Louise modeled seeing Christ in the faces of those served.

Louise also showed sincere interest in the children's education. In the places where there was already a teacher, Louise supported her work and gave her ideas and ways to improve her lessons. Where there was no teacher, Louise chose one of the liveliest, young



Louise with Children



Louise and the Ladies

members and carefully prepared her to be able to perform this especially important service.

During these visits to the Charities, Louise discovered the importance of working in close collaboration with the parish priest and the bishop. In order for the Confraternity of Charity to function smoothly and for the service to persons living in poverty to be beneficial, it was vital that the parish priest be included, on board and supportive. Overall, Louise encouraged the ladies to lead holier lives with a deeper commitment to this God-given call and mission.

As follow-up, Louise informed Vincent, in great detail, of all the difficulties encountered and suggested solutions to him, hoping for his approval. In 1630, Vincent wrote, commending and cautioning her in these words, "*I praise God that you have the health of the sixty people for whose salvation you are working, but I beg you to let me know right away whether your lung is being irritated by your talking so much or your head by so much confusion and noise.*"² He was concerned. Louise carried on!

Reflection: What does Louise's leadership style teach us for today, for our ministry as Ladies?

References:

- 1 Vincent de Paul Correspondence, Coste, volume 1 #38 pages 63-64
- 2 *ibid*, #40 page 67
- "How St. Louise Revitalized and Organized the Confraternities of Charity"
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- Brejon de Lavergnée, Matthieu, *The Streets as a Cloister, History of the Daughters of Charity*, 2020



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