

## Call to Service

### Three Roads – based on Homily by Fr. Dick Gielow, CM

Everyone needs to walk these three roads to enter the kingdom. It's not a multiple choice.

**Road 1** – The Road to Damascus. What happened on the road to Damascus? Paul's Conversion. As Catholics, we were called to conversion at our baptism. But what about now? What's your call to conversion today? What do you need to do to be great in the eyes of God? Is Jesus a passenger in your car? Is Jesus in your living room watching TV with you? If Jesus was sitting next to you, would it change your words or actions?

**Road 2** – The Road to Emmaus. What happened on the road to Emmaus? The risen Jesus was walking with two disciples, but they did not recognize him until the breaking of the bread. How do we walk this road? We should see Christ in everyone. Recognize him. Don't judge people.

**Road 3** – The Road to Jericho. What happened on the road to Jericho? The Good Samaritan. The Samaritan served the injured man with his time, talent, and treasure. The road to Jericho **CALLS US TO SERVE**. The Good Samaritan served with humility, simplicity, and charity – just as Ladies of Charity calls us to serve.

The Good Samaritan and Ladies of Charity calls us to serve with Love.

The Good Samaritan and Ladies of Charity calls us to see Christ in everyone.

If we walk the three roads, we show God we want heaven, and the people we serve will see the joy within each of us.

## LCUSA and AIC International

**LCUSA** was organized in 1960 and serves as a body of cohesion for local, national, and international associations. It arranges national meetings and provides for an annual national assembly. Regional vice-presidents promote and assist in the formation of new associations. LCUSA is available for advice and assistance if requested. It provides publications such as the Manual, the Servicette, and handbooks for presidents and spiritual formation. They provide a website that contains a wealth of information as well as an interesting map showing locations of each LOC association across the United States.

**The International Association of Charities (AIC)** is a federation of groups of lay women located in various countries, organized and working on a national or local level in the tradition of St. Vincent de Paul. In the US, the groups are known as Ladies of Charity, but in other parts of the world, they have various names. The purpose of AIC is to unite all its members in efforts of the church to alleviate poverty and to improve the lives of the disadvantaged.

If you choose to use the PowerPoint document from St. John's University, here are the talking points. Note that some parts are very specific to SJU and will need to be modified for your association. Also, the LCUSA board members change every two years and get outdated quickly.

### ***SJU PowerPoint Script***

1. LCUSA is an acronym to refer to our national organization. Ladies of Charity USA is headquartered in Kansas City Missouri
2. The country is divided into five regions. We at St. John's are in the Northeast region - the purple NY block. Currently only NY is in the northeast where there are ten associations.
3. This is a listing of our Northeast region. You can see SJU is the only association in southern New York.
4. National elections occur every two years during the national assembly. The current board was elected at the 2022 Assembly and took office January 1 of this year. The current president is Holly Walters from Buffalo, NY. Besides the offices of President, President-elect, Secretary, and Treasurer, each region has a Vice President and two Directors.
5. These are the representatives in the Northeast region. I am the Regional Vice President. Kathy Roseti and Fran Simkulet are the Directors. We work together on behalf of the region as well as each serve on at least two national committees. Since our SJU association's establishment in 2009, we have contributed a national president (Mary

Ann Dantuono), National Treasurer, (Vicky Shoaf) and two regional Directors (Marilyn Martone and myself).

6. Once a year a national assembly is held, rotating among the regions to encourage participation of as many members as possible. Here is the SJU group at two different assemblies. The 2022 assembly was in Knoxville, TN in late August. It was cancelled in 2020 and held virtually in 2021. This year it is in Buffalo, NY in early September. We hope for a good turnout particularly from the Northeast.
7. Our association at St. John's hosted the 2016 assembly when it was last held in the NE. Here are three of our members manning the registration table.
8. Resources for additional information are available. This is the LCUSA website. (<https://aic.ladiesofcharity.us>) You may sign up for weekly email blasts on this site. They are short but keep you in the loop on what is going on. Click on SUBSCRIBE in the top area. LCUSA is also on Facebook. The news magazine, Servicette is published twice per year. All members should receive a copy in the mail. All issues are also available online.
9. In an age characterized by efficiency and computerization, the face of humanity, suffering, and loneliness easily becomes obscured. The reality of human pain and misery may be lost in the midst of an impersonal world. The Ladies of Charity, recognizing this lack of human awareness, seek every opportunity to make Christ present by serving the material and spiritual needs of the sick, the poor, and the marginalized of our society. The Ladies of Charity are associations of women who participate in the Vincentian mission of prayer and service. Because the needs and resources of each community are different, our activities are as diverse as the 200 communities in which we are present. Our special concern is the needs of women and children.
10. Here is a listing of various service foci in which associations throughout the country participate. It is a wide variety, influenced by resources and need.
11. The International Association of Charities operates under the acronym of AIC. While the term "Ladies of Charity" is used in many countries, officially the national organizations are referred to as AIC-USA, AIC-France, AIC-Colombia, etc.
12. This map illustrates the 53 national associations throughout the world. Each country participates as a member of the international assembly of delegates. Decentralized regional leadership enables each country to adjust to the realities and needs of their region in efforts to combat poverty. Each country or region chooses their projects and methods. The international office or Secretariat is headquartered in Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium, and supports the Executive Board in carrying out its mission. The overall objective of the international office is to support its members while it provides training, encourages collaboration, and offers spiritual development to all of its members.
13. Elections for the executive board are held every three years during the international assembly. This group photo was from Guatemala in 2015. The assembly scheduled for

March, 2020 in Bogota Colombia was cancelled due to COVID. The 2023 gathering was in Frascati, Italy.

14. As a result of COVID, the 2020 elections were held virtually. Our current president is Rose de Lima Ramanankavana from Madagascar. (*Note: as of 2023, our president is Tayde de Callataj from Belgium*). Suzanne Johnson, top row, middle, is the US delegate and was elected to the international executive board. She is from Los Angeles and is a past president of LCUSA.
15. As a civil society organization, AIC belongs to global networks. Through representatives in these networks, AIC makes sure that the voices of disadvantaged people are heard at an international level and included in relevant international discussions.
16. Because of our SJU association location in NYC, currently two of us (Mary Ann Dantuono and Pat Mule) represent AIC at the United Nations. They collaborate with other Vincentian Family members present at the UN. All of their reporting is done directly to the international board in Belgium.
17. This is the homepage of the AIC website. It is a great source of information on activities, goals, and structure.
18. Welcome to you all. I look forward to us all coming together this year and getting to know one another.

## Service Stories (examples)

### *Service Story - Joy*

A Villa St. Francis (Catholic nursing home) experience:

I knew it would happen but I still wasn't prepared. When volunteering in a nursing home, eventually one of the people you serve will leave this world. This first happened to me about nine months after I began. Her name was Joy. She was sweet, happy, and faith-filled. As most residents, she had routines. I knew where she kept her rosary and how she wanted it placed on the table. I knew that she wanted a box of Kleenex on her right. I knew she was ready to leave Mass after the last song and before the daily announcements.

The last time I transported Joy from Mass back to her room was the Friday before Christmas. She was excited because her grandchildren and greatgrandchildren were going to visit her later that day. We sang "Joy to the World" as I rolled her back to her room. As usual, Joy was filled with joy. I am so happy she was able to spend time that day with her family.

The week after Christmas, the nurse said she needed to rest. The following week, she was sleeping. The week after, her name was gone from her room. I asked about her, but I already knew she had passed away. I prayed for her that day at Mass and cried on the way home. I was so blessed to know this amazing lady with a wonderful spirit.

Joy was just one of many that I have gotten to know through my work at Villa St. Francis. I know their names, their likes, their routines, and their spirit. What a blessing for me! I know people will come and go as I continue serving at the nursing home, but even if I'm sad when they go, each of them has touched my heart in ways that no one else has ever done. May God bless all of them.

JOY is also an acronym - **J**esus first, **O**thers next, **Y**ourself last. Thank you, Joy for giving me an example of JOY.

### ***Service Story about the Fruits of the Spirit***

I'm going to describe a person and I would like you to picture this person.

- She's faithful and attends Mass daily or as often as she can.
- She's kind and gentle to everyone she meets.
- She has a joyful laugh and uses it often.
- She is patient with the people around her and thankful for anyone helping her
- Her love of people and the peace of Christ shine through her.
- The Fruits of the Holy Spirit live within her and define her.

Can you picture this person? Do you know someone like her? Can you picture what she looks like and where she lives? What is her family like?

This is actually a description of someone that I know. The person you pictured in your mind's eye is probably very different than the person that I know.

I have described Loretta. She was a resident at Villa St. Francis (a Catholic nursing home). She was totally blind and confined to a wheelchair. The first time I met Loretta, she asked me to talk to her so she would know me by my voice. She called everyone by name because she knew their voices. She laughed a lot and would break into song with some of the staff. Everyone loved her. She said "God Bless You" often and she really meant it. It was easy to tell that she was devoted to the Holy Spirit because all nine of the fruits of the Holy Spirit shone through her. Loretta passed away on January 9, 2021.

May the soul of Loretta and the souls of all the faithful departed rest in peace. Amen.

## Service Prayers

### ***Vincentian Mission Prayer***

*By Saint John Gabriel Perboyre, CM*

Divine Savior, transform me into Yourself.

May my hands be Your hands.

May my tongue be Your tongue.

Grant that every faculty of my body

May serve only to glorify You.

Above all, transform my soul

And all its powers,

That my memory, my will and

My affections, may be the memory,

The will and the affections of You.

I pray You to destroy in me,

All that is not of You.

Grant that I may live but in You,

and by You, and for You,

And that I may truly say with St. Paul,

“I live now, not I, but Christ lives in me.”

***Prayer based on Spiritual Writings of Louise***

*Letter L.217 p.260 (written in 1648)*

God my creator,  
fill me with holiness so that my work will be useful to your work.  
May I realize that it is not enough to visit the poor and provide for their needs,  
but my heart must be free of all self-interests.  
May I have continually before me, my model, Jesus Christ.  
As a member of the Church I am called to be a disciple;  
as a member of a Vincentian group,  
may I especially imitate Jesus  
whose constant attention was on those who were poor.  
I ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord.  
Amen.

***Concluding Prayer***

Gracious God, may we take the words of Louise de Marillac to heart as we go about our responsibilities to serve our neighbor. You will bless our work and it will result in Your glory if we strive to meet the needs of those we serve. May our actions be done with great gentleness, compassion, and love. May we serve from the heart, showing affection, inquiring about needs, obtaining necessary help for those in need without being too bothersome or too eager. Grant us the grace never to leave the side of a person without having done some good work.

We pray for your blessing and for your grace, Gracious God, so that we may act in the way that Jesus acted while He was on earth because it is Jesus' work that is being done. May the same Spirit that was present in Him be present in us. We believe that Your Son Jesus, his Mother Mary, and the guardian angels of those we serve accompany us. We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.