

# SERVICETTE

TO SERVE RATHER THAN BE SERVED



NATIONAL  
ASSEMBLY  
HIGHLIGHTS  
PAGE 7



IN THE NAME OF GOD, I BEG YOU TO CULTIVATE SOLID VIRTUE, ESPECIALLY HUMILITY AND GENTLENESS. DO TO OTHERS AS YOU WOULD HAVE THEM DO TO YOU. ABOVE ALL, BE SUPPORTIVE OF THEM AND WELCOME KINDLY THOSE WHO MIGHT FIND IT DIFFICULT TO APPROACH YOU, IF THERE ARE ANY. -- ST. LOUISE DE MARILLAC



The **SERVICETTE** is a publication of the Association of the Ladies of Charity as a record of their activities in the USA.

**Editor in Chief** Holly Walter  
**Editor** Chris Young  
**Layout & Design** Shelly Clokey

*Direct all correspondence and inquires to:*

**Servicette, LCUSA Service Center**  
2816 E. 23rd St.  
Kansas City, MO 64127  
Email: [office@ladiesofcharity.us](mailto:office@ladiesofcharity.us)

### 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 30, 2024.** Articles and photos can be sent by email to: [office@ladiesofcharity.us](mailto: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 Holly Walter, LCUSA President



As we end the first year of my presidency, we can point to the successes our organization has had this year, but we can also examine areas where we need to work harder and pray more.

The Assembly held in Buffalo, New York in early September can certainly be counted as one of the successes. More than 200 ladies attended from as far away as Miami, Florida to Los Angeles, California. The assembly committees on the national, as well as the local level, planned and executed a wonderful variety of speakers, meetings, Masses, and entertainment to keep everyone up to date on activities and causes we all cherish as Ladies of Charity. A big thank you for all their hard work. The Day of Reflection, held at Niagara University on Thursday September 7th, was a wonderful success and marks the beginning of a new tradition of opening our annual assembly with time to reflect and pray together. A big thank you to Father Richard Gielow for his leadership and spirituality on this.

We must continue to try and increase our membership by making our associations and parishes visible in our dioceses and communities. If ladies hear about us and see what we do, they may be attracted to helping out and eventually joining the Ladies of Charity. Don't be hesitant about publicizing your activities in church bulletins or diocesan newsletters, or on social media. Every association across the country is different so there is no one size fits all to attract new members. You may consider changing times and days of the week when you have meetings to attract younger members. Never feel that you are "tooting your own horn" if you let others know what you are doing or who you are.

The Junior Ladies of Charity exhibit and meeting at the Buffalo Assembly was a big success with a great deal of interest shown in how to form a Junior Ladies group, and what activities they can engage in. If you have questions, or need advice please contact the National Office or Sharon Terwelp, the Junior Ladies chair at the national level.

Advocacy is a primary concern for all of us across the country. Many areas of concern such as racism, domestic violence, social justice, prolife issues, human trafficking, immigration reform and immigrants, and homelessness were explored at the assembly and were highlighted by excellent keynote, plenary, panel speakers and workshops. The assembly is an excellent way to learn more about advocacy causes and concerns. We still need advocacy liaisons in almost every region of the United States. If you are interested, or someone in your region is interested, please let me or Marlyss Giles, Vice President of the Southern Region know by emailing the national office at: [office@ladiesofcharity.us](mailto:office@ladiesofcharity.us)

Spiritual Moderators are still needed in many locations around the country. As the number of priests and sisters decreases across the nation, lay spiritual moderators will be increasingly needed to help local Ladies of Charity groups remain focused on following Vincentian teachings, and the reason why we are Ladies of Charity in the first place. Without reflection and prayer, we run the risk of just looking at our efforts to help the disadvantaged and marginalized of our communities as just work to be done, and we lose sight of the WHY and the true nature of our mission. Being a Lady of Charity is not simply joining a "do gooder" group and running a thrift store or food pantry to distribute donated items. There are plenty of other groups that help those in poverty or those who are marginalized in society. Although we work with many other charitable organizations in our communities, we must always remain focused on the teachings of St. Vincent de Paul, St. Louise de Marillac, and St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, and remain independent of other influences and charisms in our area. A well-trained Spiritual Moderator can keep groups focused on the importance of reflection, prayer, and genuine concern for the people who need us most. If you

*Continued on page 6* ▶



# “WE CHOOSE LOVE”

By The Most Reverend David A. Zubic

When the hard-working Ladies of Charity who edit your Servicette contacted me for this issue, they wrote that they were

continuing the theme “We Choose Love”— but that I could pick another topic since I had written on that topic in the last issue.

Their thoughtfulness highlighted for me how important it is for each of us to choose love over and over again — every minute, every hour, every day of every year.

Love isn’t always an easy choice. So many frustrations, hardships and disappointments can intervene. It’s difficult to love when someone has hurt us, done something terrible to us or our neighbors, or when we have lost something or someone we treasure. The great temptation is to become angry or to withdraw from caring for others so that they will not hurt us again.

But that is not what Jesus did. It is not what Saint Vincent de Paul or Saint Louise de Marillac did. When Saint Louise was orphaned, she chose love. When her priest discouraged her vocation, she chose love. When her husband’s family snubbed her, she chose love. When she was ill, widowed and depressed, Saint Louise de Marillac chose love. When she encountered people in need of hospitalization, childcare or elder care, when she came in contact with prisoners or those with mental health issues, she chose love.

She chose to love so constantly and continually that 400 years later, I am writing about her and you are reading about her because of the love that she shared with the poorest of the poor.

Saint Paul wrote that, when all else has crumbled to dust, “three things remain: faith, hope and love. And the greatest of these is love.”

You, dear Ladies of Charity, are living proof of those words. Love offered to those in need, to those who are unlovely in the eyes of the world, is stronger and more enduring than diamonds. When love is given over and over and over, especially when we would rather turn away or do something else, it creates a legacy for the ages.

Each of you is already part of the legacy of love that began with Saint Vincent de Paul and Saint Louise de Marillac. You are called to carry that love forward. With every step you take —whether you are running or using a walker — choose love. With every person you encounter —regardless of their appearance, wherever they came from or however they live — choose love. With every obstacle that frustrates you or your efforts to do good — choose love.

When someone asked Jesus whether to forgive someone as many as seven times, he replied that they should forgive endlessly — forgiving so often that you can no longer keep track. We must forgive without end, as the Lord does for us.

And that is how we must choose to love — without ceasing and without exception, because God first loved us.

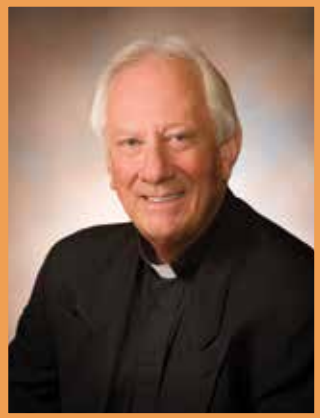


AIC USA

**DON’T FORGET TO VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR THE LATEST NEWS AT [AIC.LADIESOFCHARITY.US](http://AIC.LADIESOFCHARITY.US)**

# Greetings Ladies FROM THE HEARTLAND.

By Fr. Richard Gielow, C.M.



Rev. Richard Gielow, CM  
LCUSA Spiritual Advisor

Greetings to all the Ladies of Charity,

I am so glad that I was in Buffalo for the National Assembly. What a terrific experience. I enjoyed conducting the Day of Reflection at Niagara University. The trip to Niagara Falls afterwards was truly a time to appreciate the wonders God has created. But the great experiences didn't end there, the rest of the Assembly was filled with grace, knowledge prayer, sharing and the unfolding of why it is great being a Lady of Charity.

I left Buffalo with the renewed awareness of how important the LCUSA is, how relevant the Ladies are in a world of darkness looking for light. I know the future of LCUSA is in good hands and wonderful things will continue to take place nationally as well as locally. I hope you will mark your calendars for next year's National Assembly in St. Louis. The Arch will remind us of the Ladies of Charity being the gateway to help for all those who are in need. I look forward to seeing you there.

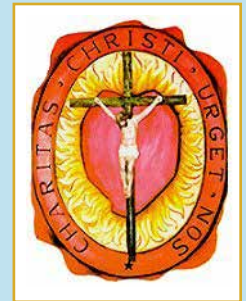
God Bless.



Sr. Ann Clair  
LCUSA Spiritual Advisor



## Welcome SR. ANN CLAIRE RHOADS OUR NEW LCUSA VINCENTIAN SPIRITUAL MODERATOR



Dear Ladies of Charity:

Thank you for your prayers. I look forward to meeting each of you in person. I'm Sr. Ann Claire Rhoads, Daughter of Charity, and I come from a Catholic family with eight siblings. My parents supported my vocations, as well as my sister Jean's (Sr. Jean). I've been a Daughter of Charity for 51 years, and an educator for about 43 years.

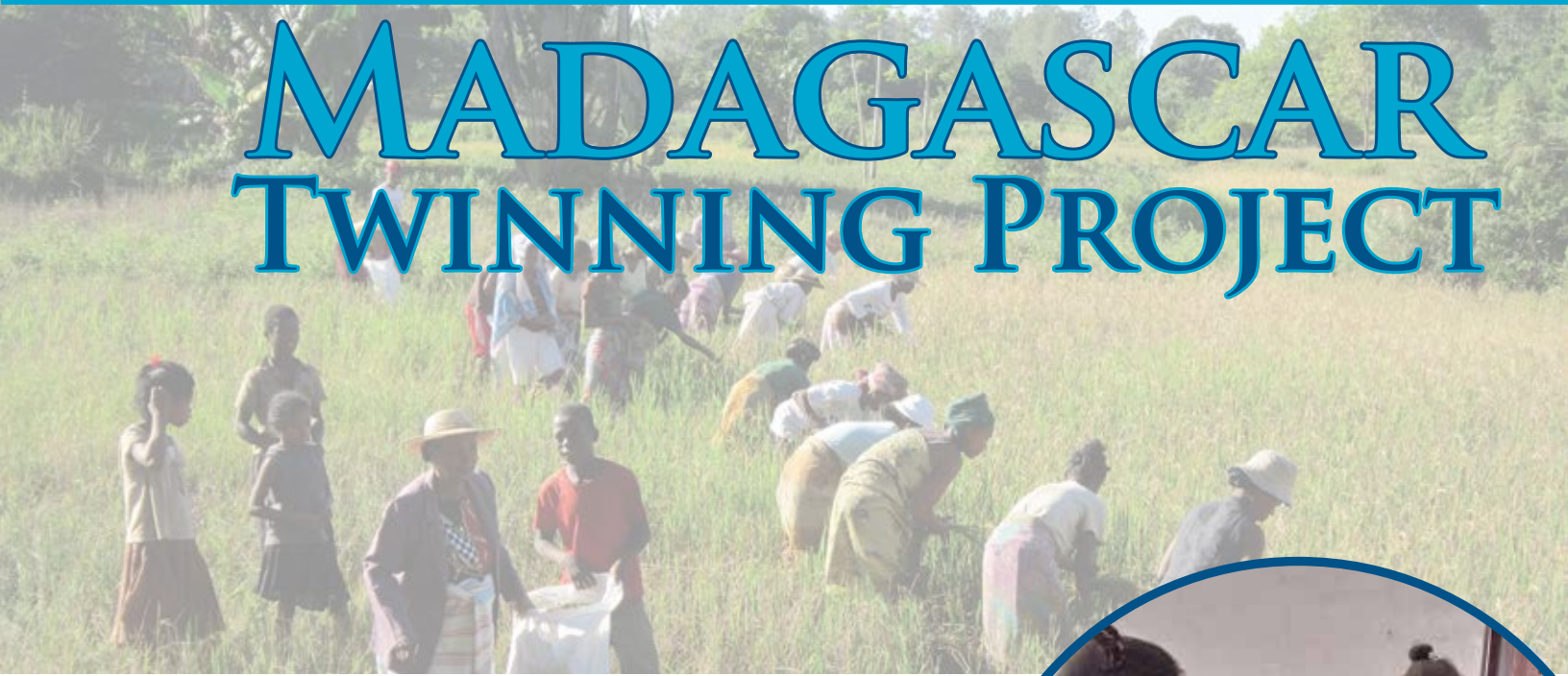
I was a docent at the Shrine of Elizabeth Ann Seton (1975) and spent a year in Vincentian education (2009). My most recent attendance in the St. Vincent de Paul Society was just previous to the Covid years.

I look forward to making a new spiritual journey with you!

God Bless each of you,  
Sr. Ann Claire



# MADAGASCAR TWINNING PROJECT



**By Holly Walter**

We need your help in getting donations to help the women and children of Madagascar. Please consider sending in your donation as soon as you can. This year at the Assembly in Buffalo New York we collected \$2100.00 for Madagascar but we need much more to really make a difference in the lives of all the impoverished people of this island nation. Funds from the last couple of year's donations were used to construct new more sturdy houses for the residents. Madagascar is often ravaged by typhoons and other climatic disasters because of its location next to the continent of Africa and the Indian Ocean. It is primarily an agricultural society with few businesses and little manufacturing.

The women and children benefit from our generosity in many ways. Women are able to start businesses and achieve independence and self respect. Children are able to receive an education that extends beyond the primary school level. The children are now able to go beyond high school and receive a college education and are thus able to break the cycle of poverty. Support for the women and children of Madagascar will pay great dividends in the future and fulfill our Vincentian promise to help those in need around the world.

I have been very happy and lucky to serve as the Madagascar chair on the LCUSA National board for the past 7 years and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future.



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

**LCUSA Service Center  
2816 East 23rd Street  
Kansas City, Missouri 64127**

**Please put Madagascar on the memo line of your check.**

**Thank You for Your Generosity,  
Holly Walter, Madagascar Chair**

*Holly Walter, continued from page 2* ▶

or others in your area feel called to be a spiritual moderator, please let me or the head of our Spiritual Moderator committee, Nancy Bianculli, know. Email the national office in Kansas City and get started by enrolling in our online Spiritual Moderator course.

You will notice that I keep mentioning members of our National board like Sharon Terwelp, Nancy Bianculli, and Marlyss Giles, and that you can contact them. The members of the National Board are there to help you, give advice, and help you get things started, or help you if there are

difficulties. That includes me. Don't hesitate to email the office if you need us.

Please consider coming to our next assembly, which will be held in St. Louis, Missouri the first weekend after Labor Day 2024. We will all enjoy visiting the birthplace of the Ladies of Charity in the United States and seeing the sights of this wonderful city and surrounding shrines and cathedrals. We will all benefit from another Day of Reflection given by Fr. Gielow to be held the first day of the assembly.

*Yours in Humility, Simplicity, and Charity,  
Holly Walter, LCUSA President*



# AIC-INTERNATIONAL AT THE UN

By MaryAnn Dantuono

The International Association of Charities is an ECOSOC accredited non-governmental organization at the UN in New York. Our aim is to bring the encounters of over 100,000 AIC volunteers, working locally in 56 countries with people experiencing poverty, homelessness, unemployment, discrimination, hunger and a lack of access to education and health care to the policy discussions of the 193 Member States.

Actively involved in this work are Pat Mulé, who focuses on the Women’s issues and the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), Dr. Linda Sama, who joined the team this summer and will focus on Financing for Development and how the international financial architecture serves the poor or doesn’t, and Mary Ann Dantuono, following Social Development issues of poverty, employment, education and health care, with the Commission on Social Development (CSocD). The team works on issues of homelessness as part of the Vincentian Family commitment of 2017 with the other branches of the family working at the UN. The three representatives are Ladies of Charity at St. John’s University (AIC-USA), and form a part of the “International Representatives” for AIC. Other AIC women are involved in UNESCO (Paris, France), the European Council (Brussels, Belgium), the UN Human Rights Council (Geneva, Switzerland), and the Vatican Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development (Rome, Italy).

The summer and fall of 2023 have been very busy at the UN in New York. In July, the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) focused on Sustainable Development Goal 11, which is about making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable. One of the commitments of Member States toward achieving Agenda 2030, is to “ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services, and upgrade slums.” This goal is a particular focus in our work to end homelessness. As part of the Working Group to End Homelessness, we created advocacy

priorities to engage Member States in dialogue, and with the Institute of Global Homelessness (IGH) at DePaul University, created a virtual event on *Ending Global Homelessness through Data-Driven Policy Solutions: United Nations High-Level Political Forum Virtual Side Event* on July 13, 2023. The discussion focused on raising awareness about homelessness, highlighting the need for better data, and encouraging the adoption of effective data collection and reporting methods at the local, national, and global levels.

We also collaborated with other groups and colleagues at events on topics of homelessness, social development, poverty alleviation and preserving the environment, including a virtual event on *“Global Homelessness and the Path Forward.”* Unanima International sponsored this discussion of the drivers, good practices from various state and non-state stakeholders, policy recommendations, and the path forward for addressing homelessness within the UN system. AIC was a panelist and discussed two AIC Projects in the presentation: In Madagascar, flooding from cyclone Batsirai in 2022 destroyed homes that the AIC had built for the widows



L-R Pat Mule, Linda Sama, MaryAnn Dantuono, and Natalie Monteza (October 5, 2023)

who are unable to inherit land from their spouse. AIC-Madagascar raised money and rebuilt 30 of “A Roof First,” the homes they had built for widows. AIC Colombia in collaboration with the Daughters of Charity began to address the needs of internally displaced survivors of armed conflict. Living on the outskirts of Bogota in squatter settlements, internally displaced peoples, primarily women and children, were seeking jobs and personal security. After developing many services including skills training, mental health services to address the issues of trauma, and, they brought in more partners to develop housing including the Famvin Homeless Alliance 13 Houses Campaign.

Moving into mid-September, the UN opened the General Assembly at a time when the word “polycrisis” is being used to describe the “signs of the times.” We

*Continued on page 21* ▶



# Love EMBODIED THE NATIONAL LADIES OF CHARITY ASSEMBLY HELD IN BUFFALO, NY

By Chris Young  
Servicette Editor

Buffalo, New York and a visit to Niagara Falls were the settings for the 2023 AIC-Ladies of Charity of the United States of America Assembly Sept. 7-9, but on the minds of the LCUSA members were the eight victims of the grocery store shooting for whom the theme of the Assembly was chosen, "We Choose Love." The national assembly was also held in Buffalo in September 2006.

The speakers for this year's Assembly were chosen around the theme of love and included such topics as a holistic restorative approach to human trafficking, the WIC program in West New York, and the agency's food pantries, and domestic violence prevention. Other speakers spoke about refugee resettlement, advocacy for peer services reducing stigma for mental health, and substance use.



Day of Reflection

A Day of Reflection: "A Lady of Charity is a Lady of Prayer," was held on Thursday at Niagara University presented by Father Richard Gielow, CM, LCUSA Vincentian Spiritual Advisor for 35 years. A Mass was concelebrated by Fr. Gielow, Fr. Anthony Loc Nguyen, CM, and Fr. Joseph Hubbert, CM.

In his homily, Fr. Gielow quoted a bishop in Kansas he knows, who often said, "We can't solve hunger, those who are hungry today will be hungry tomorrow. We can't solve homelessness; the people who are without houses, will be without houses tomorrow. We can't solve hunger; we can't solve homelessness, but we can give people hope. Somebody cares.

"We are really blessed people, but you can't do that without faith. You've got to believe - trust without question," Fr. Gielow said. "You turn to the greatest gift of all, praying, and you turn to the Sacrament of Life and the Sacrament of Love. We choose love. That's why you're all Ladies of Charity - You Choose Love. You have hope, you need faith, and you choose love."



Fr. Gielow Mass

To begin the Day of Reflection, Fr. Gielow said what he needed to talk about was Heaven. There are people and children who don't go to church any more, he said, then asked, who is going to evangelize? "I believe everybody is going to Heaven, he said. "The challenge is, how do we show it? You can't earn it. We accept what St. Paul said because of his conversion - How can children of God be bad people?"

"What do you need to do to be called great today in the eyes of God?" Fr. Gielow asked. He then referred to the Road to Emmaus and what was said there, 'You haven't heard what they did to Jesus?' and the Road to Jericho, and the story of the Samaritan and the Jew, and the Road to Damascus, and St. Paul's conversion. "We've got to see the face of Jesus in our neighbors," said Fr. Gielow.

Sometimes in walking these three roads, we don't know what is the right way to go? he said. "Just think of the number of people who are helped by the [Ladies of Charity.] We are talking thousands every day and every month. The more they see the greatness in [the Ladies of Charity], the more they have hope. Our country is hungry for something positive to rally around, he said.

"Our country needs a great awakening," said Fr. Gielow. "Aquinas' definition of love was, 'Work hard to bring out the best in the other.' Imagine, we'd have a powerful world. I always ask, 'Why are you a lady of charity?' The answers vary. [The Ladies of Charity] are very unique. There is no other all lay women organization. Lady of Charity - men don't fit that definition."

To be a Lady of Charity is a gift and a blessing from God, he said. "Vincent believed in organization," Fr. Gielow said. "God has called you. Vincent's and Louise's plan was to carry out Jesus' plan - He wanted

Continued on page 8 ►

Continued from page 7 ▶

love to replace hate, forgiveness to replace revenge, compassion to replace apathy, light to replace darkness, and life to replace death. That was his dream. So everything they tried to do was to make sure that dream came true.”

The only reason that the Ladies of Charity works, “is because you understand the difference between service and ministry,” said Fr. Gielow. “There are a lot of people who provide a lot of great service, but when people do service in the name of Jesus – its ministry. You have to be willing to go into tough neighborhoods, serve the poorest of the poor, and deal with drug issues. The last quality you’ve got to have is humility. Humble people know how to serve and minister.

“Jesus said, ‘Be like me, meek and humble.’ All good comes from God. Admit you are a sinner. His last words on the cross were about forgiveness – the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Be prayerful, don’t seek to get even; want others to have the same happiness as you, Fr. Gielow said. The greatest joy of heaven is to experience God.”

“What people need the most is your spiritual life,” Fr. Gielow said. “The Ladies of Charity goal is why we love what we do – Vincent changed the thinking of a country. Vincent was well connected, wealthy, and could do and say things. He founded the Ladies of Charity, Daughters of Charity and Confraternity of Priests and Brothers, but he said, ‘I could’ve done more.’

The LCUSA National Assembly, “We Choose Love,” also began with an opening Mass celebrated by Fr. Gielow, who said we now have a “great love of the scriptures and today we celebrate the birthdate of Mary, so much has been written about her; the coredemptrix of our church. ‘Behold she will be with child; God is with her.’

“I share that, because it is of her, we celebrate the Eucharist,” Fr. Gielow said. “Emanuel – God is with us. Today we say, ‘Mary is with us; she has never abandoned us. So it is only proper that we celebrate her. I know she is with us and would never abandon us,’” he said.

Following the Mass, LCUSA President Holly Walter, who became a Lady of Charity in 2008, welcomed the women to Buffalo; she joined the LCUSA board in 2017. Walter, talking about the theme said the grocery store tragedy was one of the most heartbreaking things that has ever occurred in Buffalo, “which is not a racist community,”

she added. “We choose love as Ladies of Charity because we truly love the people we serve.” She converted to the Catholic Church in 1974, and has seen her conversion grow spiritually through the Holy Spirit, she said.



*Holly Walter, President*

The keynote address, “Who is My Neighbor?” The Parable of the Good Samaritan: A Vincentian Perspective” by Daughter of Charity Sr. Ellen LaCapria, followed the president’s welcome. Sr. Ellen has been a Daughter of Charity for 47 years. Her professional background in nursing and creative arts led her to a mystery of art therapists and adults with mental health concerns. She has also worked with the Vincentian Family promoting systemic change in several countries throughout the globe.

Sr. Ellen’s talk began with a poem and the parable of the Good Samaritan. “Choosing love over hate is one of the hardest things to do, but it is also the noblest,” she said. “It is easy to love the people who are good to us, but it is also easy to hate the people who treat us with hate – hating the people who hate us will only bring more hate.”

Choosing love over hate isn’t easy – it’s a decision we can make every day.

- 1) Choose to be kind, it’s a key to hearts. Kindness is love in action.
- 2) Practice compassion. Be concerned for the misfortune of others; sympathy and the desire to relieve others of their distress. Empathize with others, even if you can’t see eye to eye.
- 3) Forgive – forgiveness is the most essential step; you can’t always choose love over hate, it’s a constant challenge.



*Sr. Ellen LaCapria*

“It isn’t always easy to choose love over hate – hating someone is easier,” said Sr. Ellen. The Parable of the Good Samaritan provides an example of risk-taking love. The victim in the parable who was attacked and abandoned, is a victim of the unknown. He represents everyone and anyone, she said. He is a symbol for anyone who gets abused and downtrodden. By doing this, Christ wants us to pay no attention to racial, religious, or socio-economic categories. So how do we relate to people who are different from us? What is our responsibility toward the many hurting people in the world? Who is our neighbor?



In Pope Francis' Encyclical Fratelli Tutti, being a neighbor is not restricted to a relation or proximity, it is merely the demonstration of love and mercy of a god who is in awe, whomever and wherever they may be, again, regardless of racial, religious, or socio-economic backgrounds, said Sr. Ellen. Jesus teaches us that love is an action, not a feeling and not a theory.

So in the parable, the priest and the Levite were religious men, but their actions betray their humanity; whereas the Samaritan demonstrated the opposite. He saw the victim as deserving his time and attention. ... "We have been reconciled. Like the man who had been beaten and robbed in the parable, we were once naked and in need of converting. The Father clothed us in the blood of his son. He bestows value and dignity on those who love him.

The next speaker, fighting for those who may be considered the underdog, disadvantaged or forgotten was LCUSA workshop speaker Kelly Diane Galloway, Founder and President of Project Mona's House, a holistic restorative program that exists to serve those who have been exploited through human trafficking and those who are at risk. She is also the founder of Ramp Global Missions, a Christian Humanitarian organization that serves the needs of broken, impoverished and exploited people around the world.

The people who can teach you the best about Human Trafficking is the people who have been through it, said Galloway. She named Project Mona's House after a woman who had been Human Trafficked and escaped, was able to get into a refugee camp, and moved into a safe house, where she met Galloway. Mona taught her the scripture Rom 8:18, "Tomorrow is going to be better than today." What that really means is hope. That is why she named her project Mona's House.

Human trafficking happens in the United States in our cities and counties, to over 40.3 million people worldwide, and less than 1 percent are ever rescued. The top three crimes in the world are the buying and selling of drugs, weapons, and of human beings. The most vulnerable are runaway children, runaway foster children, LGBTQ young people, children with substance abuse issues, refugee children, and children with a background of trauma. There is an organization called MAP (minor attractive person). These are individuals who are trying to change the legislations to make pedophilia legal, because it is illegal to buy children for sex.

To help join the fight against human trafficking:

- 1) Become a volunteer with the Mona's House organization.
- 2) Be a mentor to a victim.
- 3) Make a plate of food, clean up
- 4) Donate \$1/day to Mona's House
- 5) Educate yourself on human trafficking
- 6) See Something, Say Something
- 7) Make a donation

Another way humans are abused and victimized is through domestic violence. Susan Montgomery-Clark, Cofounder & Board President of the Megan Montgomery Foundation to Prevent Domestic Violence, Inc., was the Saturday morning Plenary Speaker on "Surviving the Unthinkable by Overcoming Evil with Good."

On Dec. 1, 2019, when her 31 year-old daughter Megan was murdered at the hands of Megan's estranged husband, Susan and her family's lives changed forever. She closed her consulting practice to volunteer full-time to fulfill Megan's dream of preventing domestic violence before it happens. This led to her husband Rod Clark, and daughter Meredith Montgomery-Price creating The Megan Montgomery Foundation.

The mission of their grant-making fund is to "Save lives by preventing relationship violence before it starts." It is a tax-exempt 501(c)3 corporation. In two years since its creation, they have distributed more than \$50,000 to schools and colleges for healthy relationship education.

Megan thought she was born to save animals. At age 29 in July of 2017, was when she first met the man she later married. At first he seemed like she found her prince charming. He was a police officer, and used the uniform as a stereo type. Her mother said she was revictimized by the criminal justice system. Domestic violence is about coercive control and manipulation, emotional and psychological control of one person over another.

According to the Department of Justice the rate of violent victimization in the United States rose to 23.5



*Kelly D. Galloway*



*Susan Montgomery-Clark*

*Continued on page 10* ▶

Continued on from page 9 ▶

victimizations per 1,000 persons age 12 or older in 2022, after reaching a 30-year low of 16.4-16.5 during 2020-2021. Violent victimization includes rape or sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault. They start out as bullies, but not all bullies turn out to be domestic violence abusers.

Like the victims of sexual assault and domestic violence, refugees have to tell their stories over and over again, and if there are any inconsistencies, their case can be denied, said Panelist Shyam K. Sriram, PhD., Assistant Professor, Dept. of Political Science Canisius College. The Plenary Panel Discussion “Our Ethical and Moral Duty to Care for Refugees,” with moderator Julie Lulek, senior director, Catholic Charities of Buffalo, Director, Ladies of Charity Buffalo, explained the difficulty refugees face. The Panelists included: Shyam K. Sriram, PhD.; Kathy Elias, member of a Buffalo ecumenical grass roots community who assists refugees in resettlement.



*Panelists; Shyam K. Sriram, PhD.; Kathy Elias, and Julie Lulek*

Who is a refugee? The Refugee Convention was originally only supposed to last three years, and it still isn't over. It began as a plan to help Jewish refugees in 1951, and it hasn't been amended. Now we have many more refugees. A refugee is a person who is fleeing persecution because of race, religion, nationality, membership of a group, or political opinion; so what is not covered is climate change, gang violence, sexual orientation, and a host of other reasons why someone would flee a country. IDPs, or internally displaced people, don't get the benefits of refugees because they have crossed the border into another country, they have languished in the refugee camps. There are a good portion, 58 percent are IDPs. Asylum seekers are not refugees either, they have to register, but may not get refugee status. Sixty-nine percent of all refugees come from five countries: Syria, Venezuela, Columbia, Turkey and Pakistan.

There is a major housing shortage and job shortage; they are expected by the federal government to be self-sufficient in 90 days. The cost of eating is more than the SNAP (food stamp benefits).

Also on the panel was Kathy Elias who used the theme, “We Choose Love,” to explain the grass roots project she was involved in. It included a group of women from the Church of Jesus

Christ of Latter-day Saints, Quakers, Christians, Jews, high schoolers, Vincentians and other people with a lot of determined soul. The agencies she worked with were Jewish Family Services, Catholic Charities, and Journey's End; these are the places that gave us the apartments, she said. The gatherers from all different places, donated furniture and household items needed to set up the households. Volunteers created clean, new homes for the refugees.

Elias' work with Refugees began in 2022 when a small group of St. Joseph University Church Vincentians in Buffalo decided they wanted to do more to assist the resettlement of Afghans in the Buffalo area. They connected with Catholic Charities and after resettling about 30 families, have become a grass roots community ecumenical group of about 120 volunteers, who desire to “love their neighbor” by

creating a warm, welcoming home for refugees who have been forced from their home country. They partner with Journey's End and Jewish Family Services to assist them in the resettlement process. Kathleen is a retired middle school social worker, who is presently a faculty field liaison for the University of Buffalo School of Social Work.

In another way, Cheryl Calire, Director of Pro-Life Activities, Diocese of Buffalo, explained in a workshop to the Ladies of Charity how she is pro-life from conception to end of life. Since 2015, Cheryl and her husband have lived in a former rectory in the inner city which houses the Mother Teresa Home, serving moms and families involved in unplanned and unsupported pregnancies. She is also the Director of Pastoral Ministries for the diocese.



*Cheryl Calire*

Married 30-years in a blended family with five children, Cheryl faced the situation where her 16 year-old son's girlfriend was pregnant, and her parents wanted her to have an abortion. Cheryl's son wanted to keep the baby as did Cheryl; they approached the girlfriend's family. The girlfriend was 15 going on 16, and her family wanted her to get an abortion, and knew of a place that would do it right up to birth. Through prayer, persuasion and getting her son's girlfriend into her ob-gynecologist, the baby was saved and is now 16 years old.

She then worked on end of life issues by taking care of several relatives at the end of their lives until death



while suffering many health issues herself. Somehow by volunteering, her autoimmune diseases started going into remission. She never looked back, she just prayed 'Dear Lord, tell me what you want me to do and I'll do it.' "We went from a 4,000 square foot house to living in a rectory and started a ministry," she said.

"My son got custody of his son," Cheryl said. "The judge was amazed that a young man 16 years old would step up to the plate and do the right thing. He stayed with us until he was 18, she said, and got his first apartment."

Now Cheryl was living with her husband in an inner city rectory, which houses the Mother Teresa Home, serving moms and families involved in unplanned and unsupported pregnancies. In the last seven years, the Mother Teresa Home has helped, serving people of all faiths or no faith, 100 moms and 104 babies. As soon as they move in, we develop a plan for them to move out. Everything we do depends on donations.

The average woman who stays is 25 years old, and 86 percent are African American. They are too proud to go home, and parents look at them, as does the boyfriend, and say, 'well you figure it out.' Many come from foster homes. We have to teach them basic rules to follow. Some of them have never slept in a bed, let alone how to make it, or how to mop floors or clean a house; they only know trying to survive, she said. "We need to reach out to our brothers and sisters in a fair way."

Cheryl is also the Director of Pastoral Ministries for the dioceses.

Also concerned with housing issues was speaker Toni Taylor, Director of Housing and Peer Services at Recovery Options Made Easy, Inc., (ROME), one of Western New York's leading peer-certified and trauma-informed mental health advocacy networks that creates a continuum of support, reducing stigma and paving roads to recovery. ROME is committed to decreasing stigma by increasing awareness of mental health and substance use through information, education, and advocacy. Taylor has been with Recovery Options for more than seven years, and is a graduate of SUNY Empire State College with a Bachelor of Science in Community and Human Services, with a focus on Addiction and Holistic Healing; she is passionate about recovery.

Taylor is a domestic violence survivor, she said, and shares her story to empower, educate and encourage others. Regardless of sex, gender, race, religion, economic status; everyone has the right to access care in all populations, she said.



*Spiritual Retreat*


"Individuals with the stigma of mental health issues may take on feelings they can't control, such as embarrassment, isolation and feeling ashamed, causing them to turn to drug abuse or alcohol and a reluctance to seek or get help. There may be a lack of understanding by family, friends, co-workers, and others. Or fewer opportunities for work, school, social activities; barriers for finding and maintaining housing.

Ways to make mental health care more accessible is by reducing the stigma and showing kindness, compassion and empathy. But sometimes culture plays a factor in whether or not people seek help. Sometimes treatment for mental health is looked upon as weakness, spiritual attack, attention seeking, even disrespectfulness.

The harmful effects of stigma and inability to ask for help can lead to fewer opportunities for employment or social interaction, bullying, physical violence, isolation, harassment, and suicide. So we should educate ourselves and others, respond to misperceptions and negative comments, be conscious of one's language, and remember that words matter. Community provides a sense of longing; we have to support one another. It encourages individuals to seek help. Then it is easier to fight the not in my backyard mentality.

The final speaker, Dennis Walczyk is currently the coordinator of Social Justice Ministries at St. Joseph University Parish in Buffalo. Prior to his retirement in 2020, after 44 years, he held various direct service and executive leadership positions in the community organizing and in human service fields. Those included President and CEO of Catholic Charities of Buffalo, where he served for 23 years. He also serves as Chair of the Board of Back to Basics Ministries, Inc., and is a member of the Board of Directors of Felician Services, Inc., headquartered in Chicago.

Social Justice is a government program such as the SNAP or the Food Stamp program, or the status of Women, a social justice issue. Social justice can describe an event or a person - it goes back to the Bible - "walk humbly with your God, "Suppress no one," or "There is neither male nor female, for you are all one." In the New Testament there are many examples as to how Jesus showed a special love for people who were poor, sick, outcasts, afflicted, young children, prostitutes, and ministered to them, and told the apostles to continue administering to them. All through the scriptures he showed a special love toward the oppressed.

The Catholic Church proclaims that human life is sacred, and that the dignity of a person is the foundation of a moral life, which is sacred and that people are more important than things. People who turn to charity, often lobby for social justice issues. 

# ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON LADIES OF CHARITY HOLD MEET & GREET RECEPTION FOR AIC-INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT

By Regina Barrett, President



## PRINCE GEORGES COUNTY LADIES OF CHARITY

It was such a privilege and an honor to meet the AIC-International President Tayde de Callatay at the reception at St. Ann's Center for Children, Youth & Families. She was the final puzzle piece to the Vincentian Family connection of the Ladies of Charity. She was very personable and caring. It was assuring knowing that the AIC is now present in more than 50 countries with over 100,000 volunteers, and we are all of the same spirit, all on one team to fight poverty in its many forms in different ways, languages and cultures ... but all the same. She was very impressed with all of the units of the Archdiocese of Washington, she said.

Calvert County Ladies of Charity gave an awesome presentation, but she listened intently to what each of the areas shared, and all were important to her and the mission we are all on together. 'I, Regina Barrett, was also honored that she visited Mount Calvary Church and our Food Pantry.

It is also important that there were several Daughters of Charity at the reception, and they were so grateful to be invited for what they felt may be a once in a lifetime event.

Thank you so much to Viola Johnson-Robinson and Debbie Self (both LCUSA board members) for inviting, providing hospitality and transportation for such a memorable event. ■



# LADIES OF CHARITY AND FRIENDS GATHER TO BID THEIR PRESIDENT FAREWELL

## OUR LADY OF LOURDES LADIES OF CHARITY • SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH •

By Chris Young, Servicette Editor

“We gather as a community of love, faith, and appreciation for the many gifts we have come to know through Jackie. We are grateful for her commitment, time and love for this community. We pray that the holy spirit may guide her, fill her with zeal, be with her, and strengthen her in what



ever adventures may await her,” prayed Dominican Father Michael Augustine Amabisco to begin the farewell reception in Jackie Harover’s honor Jan. 9, 2024. Jackie is moving to Alabama to be with family members.

Jackie Harover grew up all over the world as a young girl, including Japan and Austria; her father was in the military. Following in his footsteps after her last year in nursing school, she too, joined the U.S. Army. After three years in the army, she went into public health service and was assigned in Cincinnati, Ohio, before being sent to Utah to do testing on Kennecott Copper Corp. employees.

“I loved Utah and the mountains, so after I finished my job at Kennecott, I moved to Utah,” said Jackie. She then started working for the University of Utah Medical Center until her retirement.

Jackie became a Lady of Charity after hearing Daughter of Charity Sister Charlotte Marie Clark, who started the Ladies of Charity in Utah, speak at Our Lady of Lourdes church in 2004. Right away she wanted to get involved. It wasn’t until 2008 that there were enough members at Our Lady of Lourdes to get a Charter. Jackie became president and held that position until 2023, minus a year and a half when the position was filled by someone else. Basically, she was president for almost 15 years.

“My philosophy was to help those who need help,” Jackie said. “I just love being a Lady of Charity and the whole philosophy of what we do, helping those who need help. I love being around the Ladies of Charity and going to the Assemblies; they stimulate me. I had such a wonderful group

of women to work with, we’re all committed to doing the same thing. The parish has been very supportive of the Ladies of Charity.”

“I am impressed with how much time Jackie commits to the church, and is willing to sacrifice, and that she has stepped up to become president for so many years,” said Narda Nordell, a Lady of Charity at Our Lady of Lourdes. “I am going to miss her.”

Kathy Clarken, who volunteered for the vacant position of president, said she is a little nervous about taking over for someone who has held the position for so long, and has established ways of doing things. “I want everyone to participate, not only the Ladies of Charity, but all the Catholic women in the parish. I want us to be unified as a group,” said Kathy. I’m so glad I went to the National Assembly and that I took the Spiritual Moderator course.

Martha Paul who was born in Columbia South America, will serve as the Spiritual Moderator. “I didn’t feel like I could do this, but they said I could. I didn’t feel anything special about me, so I’m grateful and I’m willing to be the Spiritual Moderator.”

Jackie feels she is leaving the Ladies of Charity at Our Lady of Lourdes in good hands saying, “Both Kathy and her daughter, Jaque, are very hard workers.”

DAILY PRAYER WAS KEY TO ESTABLISHING

THE ALL-HISPANIC MIAMI LADIES OF CHARITY

By Chris Young  
Servicette Editor

“All the banners and decorations” at the Ladies of Charity Assembly in Buffalo, “look so beautiful, and we know that Alcira Villarreal and Eva Morales are doing a good job of representing us. They have been sending us pictures,” said Paulina Velez, president of the All-Hispanic Miami Ladies of Charity Association in Miami, Florida, who wishes she could have attended.

The Ladies of Charity of Miami began in 2019, with a meeting with the Daughters of Charity at a well-known shrine in Miami, where they had been receiving many immigrants from Cuba, and some from Haiti. As it turns out, Paulina is employed with an organization that works with the Federal government and State of Florida, who both fund assistance for immigrants. A friend of Paulina’s from the Society of St. Vincent de Paul had asked her to meet with the Daughters of Charity to offer these available services to the immigrants at the Shrine.

“It was a very special day, May 31. That was our very first meeting, and it was also the Visitation of Mary and her cousin Isabel,” said Paulina. “We met with the Daughters of Charity and my friend, Fernando Reyes, from the Society of St. Vincent de Paul; they said they were expanding the branches of the Vincentian family.”

The Society of St. Vincent had been in Miami for 100 years, and the Daughters had been there for 50 years, but there were no other branches. They wanted to put their forces together to assist those in need; they wanted to create the Miraculous Medal Association and the Ladies of Charity.

“May 31 was special for me because three years earlier,

I had been in France at the Chapel of the Miraculous Medal on that same date,” said Paulina. “When I finished the meeting with them, a reminder came on my phone reminding me I had been at the Miraculous Medal Chapel in Paris. Not only that, I also grew up with three aunts who were Daughters of Charity, and I already had a spiritual devotion to the Miraculous medal. When I found out about these sisters, everything started making sense to me, and one of them actually knew one of my aunts who had passed away.”



When Paulina started researching the Ladies of Charity nationally and internationally, she was impressed with how “St. Vincent began such a wonderful project for women, and to have them together with the Daughters of Charity, was a perfect combination,” she said.

Her investigation led her to Fr. J. Flavio CM, in Pennsylvania, who guided her to AIC-LCUSA, which led her to Anneleis Geelen, who at that time was the LCUSA Southern Region Vice President. “Anneleis was my mentor and guided us through the process and requirements,” said Paulina, who then went to her local bishop for permission. “Through God’s providence, we met with the bishop and the Daughters of Charity, who explained everything, and finally in September, right before St. Vincent de Paul’s feast day, he approved us, signed the application, and we sent it to LCUSA for approval.

The Ladies of Charity in Miami were recognized as a nonprofit organization and were ready to start on a lot of projects when the Corona Virus hit in March of 2020 and everything shut down, Paulina said, even though they continued to meet to still get organized.



“One person from the Society of St. Vincent de Paul was part of our initial team, and I think that was important because that helped us understand what they do.” They began working together with the Daughters and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

When the pandemic shut them down, “We decided to pray,” Paulina said. “They also prayed the rosary daily and prayed a Consecration to the Blessed Virgin Mary Novena with more than 100 people. That brought us a Spiritual Advisor - Sister Amanda Mora, a Daughter of Charity. We call her Sr. Fanny. She sent a letter to Germany to ask for Miraculous medals, and we received one million medals for free. The cost to ship - everything was free. Our team with the support of the Virgin Mary, had our first project to distribute the medals to people who were homebound, sick, who couldn't pay their rent, utilities, or needed food, diapers, or other essentials.

Along with the Daughters, the Ladies of Charity started doing fundraisers to help these people with their basic needs. “When we went in to our visits, we would distribute the medals and pray with the people.”

From there, doors started opening, Paulina said. Prayer, the Rosary, the Internet and technology - “We were able to do formation online, Covid-19 kept us from meeting with people in-person, but we didn't lose any time,” she said. “We had to be innovative, and made connections with companies and food banks who would give us food to distribute in boxes, and with others who were generous. We would also give the people a Miraculous medal.”

The Ladies of Charity of Miami are impressed “how Mary used Miami through the Miraculous medal because a lot of people were asking us for help,” said Paulina. “Since we are so close to South and Central America, and people were traveling and in difficult situations, we were sending supplies and food to various countries - Venezuela, Columbia, Ecuador, and Central America; we were working with other organizations to send emergency food and supplies, and medals to these countries.”

Karen Chirinos and Eva Morales were involved in sending basic supplies to Venezuela, as well as those in need in Miami. “We pray every day,” Eva said, adding in Spanish they are a prayer community.

“Our lessons learned came from our advisor, Sr. Amanda, who was very wise in telling us that we have to be in constant prayer for us to be able to do our job. We pray daily,” said Paulina.

Their prayers were answered when Alcira and Eva were able to attend the 2023 LCUSA Assembly in Buffalo. “We did not even think we would be able to make it to the Assembly this year,” said Paulina, adding “we sent two lovely angels through the power of prayer.”

“It has been so great,” said Eva. “It is God's providence.”

The Ladies of Charity of Miami now have about 35 members, who belong to different ministries connected to the services the community offers, especially those used by immigrants. They consist of women from South and Central America. “It's beautiful because everyone brings their culture in,” said Paulina. “The majority of us are Hispanic.”

LOC Miami meets in Casa Maria and uses it as their headquarters, which is also where the Daughters of Charity meet and have their projects. “We sell rosaries, and other Catholic products there, and put the money toward our projects,” said Alcira.

One project the Miami LOC is involved with is young people working with each other teaching Catechism and creating spirituality with their peers through technology. “We are working with the Daughters of Charity on this project in each country in South and Central America,” said Paulina. Something that evolved from that is a program where sponsors for other children in Miami, as well as South and Central America pay their education, basic needs, and interact with these other children teaching them spirituality and talking about God. “That project has been extremely beautiful because we work with the Daughters of Charity in each country; we are channels for the Daughters of Charity,” said Paulina. We remember how special St. Vincent thought it was to work with kids, and I think he is giving us a hand.”

Some of these young people literally come from the jungle, and when they come to Miami from Cuba, Nicaragua, Columbia, Guatemala; they have a lot of challenges getting adapted to the educational system in the United States, so they need tutoring and other assistance. “We are trying to help them with tutoring, sponsoring them for their GED, so they can get adjusted in the U.S.,” said Paulina.

The Miami LOC also helps others in need with food, clothing, household furniture, which is called Matthew 25, and most of the people are Spanish from Cuba, Nicaragua, Columbia, and some from Haiti.

“We want to do so much,” said Paulina, adding and we have more medals coming from Germany.”

## VINCENTIAN SPIRITUAL MODERATORS FOR ALL:

DO YOU FEEL CALLED TO DEVELOP YOUR SPIRITUALITY OR BECOME A LAY VINCENTIAN SPIRITUAL MODERATOR?

NEXT FORMATION TRAINING NOVEMBER 10 AND 11, 2023  
APPLICATION AND MORE CLARIFICATION AVAILABLE ON LCUSA WEB.

The VSM formation program was started to clarify the importance of the roles and responsibilities of the VSM and to provide consistency across all associations. The formation consists of an 8 hour on line training course and 8 months of mentoring via phone text or zoom meetings. The completed program will commence with commissioning of VSM at the National Assembly.

*Eight Ladies of Charity were commissioned at the Buffalo Assembly.*

Bea Clink  
Betty Ann Coda  
Eileen D’Orazio  
Mary Ann Harmon  
Karen Mauer  
Florence Nwonye  
Anna Rocchio  
Sharon Terwelp

*The other option is to take only the 8-hour training session offered by zoom without mentoring. Eight Ladies of Charity also received a certificate at the Buffalo Assembly.*

Cindy Betz  
Vicki Farley  
Angela Gaughan  
Annelies Geelen  
Mary Hand  
Joanie Miree  
Margaret Reddan  
Dallas Teague

The program provides education and resources on Vincentian Spirituality, history, tradition and charism. Every LOC Association needs a Vincentian Spiritual Moderator. Does your Association need someone? E-mail [office@ladiesofcharity.us](mailto:office@ladiesofcharity.us) or call the office 816-260-3853 and leave your name and contact information; someone will be in touch to answer any of your questions.







## • THE CHARITY LINK •



### Message From President Kathleen Roseti Buffalo Ladies of Charity

Cheers to all our amazing volunteers! It was wonderful to work with and see everyone at the LCUSA National Assembly we hosted in Buffalo in September. Your hospitality and graciousness were abundant for the whole country to experience!

Buffalo truly is the “City of Good Neighbors” and being with all of you is the best part of being president. So, I thank every one of you for your love and support in this very big endeavor; whether as a volunteer, a participant, a donor or in prayer, but also as our volunteers worked tirelessly at the Center on Broadway.

One big new challenge was assisting the many asylum seekers living in Buffalo, referred to our thrift store for clothing and shoes by Catholic Charities caseworkers. Due to limited ability to communicate, we purchased an iPad to give us access to an on-line translating application which provides the ability to communicate with people from countries throughout the world.

As we moved into fall, we delivered more than 400 backpacks to children in our community, our Style Show committee planned and prepared for the event and we prepared for our Christmas toy and Homebound programs. None of these things happen on their own.

We depend on our membership to support these programs again through volunteering, prayer and financial help. So, please consider getting involved in whatever works for you. The LOVE you will experience is worth the investment of time or treasure.

### God Bless the Ladies of Charity! Kathy Roseti





## LADIES OF CHARITY OF BASTROP, TEXAS CELEBRATE 40 YEARS OF SERVICE

The Ladies of Charity of Bastrop, Texas celebrated 40 years of service to the poor in Bastrop County at their monthly association meeting on August 10, 2023.

The Ladies of Charity of Bastrop was chartered by the National Ladies of Charity on August 13, 1983, and Father Edward J. Dokupil officiated at the formal reception inducting 15 members. An additional three ladies were invested in December.

The 40-year celebration began with a Communion Service officiated by Deacon Corby Weiss, followed by a recitation of the Rosary led by Eva Friske. A timeline of events were displayed in the hall showing the volunteer hours and number of families helped over the past 40 years. There was also a memorial table of pictures presented of all the deceased Ladies of Charity members.

President Putzie Martin, spoke about the history of our organization, and shared some humorous memories of the struggles of our first thrift store being attached to a feed store.

Thelma Warren, anniversary committee chairman, gave the invocation and honored the 88 deceased LOC members with a moment of silence and a prayer.



## PRINCE GEORGES LADIES OF CHARITY COME TOGETHER AFTER PANDEMIC

The Prince Georges County, Maryland Ladies of Charity held its first post pandemic in-person new member induction service and luncheon hosted by the St. Hugh of Grenoble Church Ladies of Charity Sept. 24, 2023. More than 100 Prince Georges Ladies of Charity members and guests attended. The Prince Georges Ladies of Charity come from Catholic Churches throughout the county, and coordinate food pantries, clothes closets and other services for those in need.

Regina Barrett, President of the Prince Georges Ladies of Charity, said how "Wonderful it was to again meet in person to induct 14 new members and to share a meal together as a community." Barrett thanked the St. Hugh of Grenoble Ladies of Charity for hosting the event.

Michael Brooks, St. Hugh Archdiocesan Deacon Candidate, presided at the service, and encouraged the ladies "to maintain their faith and good works in these very challenging times."



*Mary Ann Tretler is President of St. Hugh of Grenoble Church Ladies of Charity, Greenbelt, Maryland.*



# THE LADIES OF CHARITY CALVERT COUNTY — CELEBRATE 55 YEARS — OF SERVING THE COMMUNITY

By Peggy McKelly

At the June member meeting, the Ladies of Charity of Calvert County celebrated the 55th anniversary of our organization. We reflected about our formation on Ascension Thursday in May 1968. Twenty-four ladies were inducted into the Ladies of Charity St. Anthony. Guidance from the Archdiocese emphasized the need and challenge for service in the Archdiocese of Washington. The pastor of St. Anthony's, Rev. Francis Chodnicki, was very supportive of the establishment of our organization. A clothing store was established as the first fundraising project to help the poor in the parish and the surrounding area.

Our organization over the years, has grown in membership and clients. About 30 years ago, the primary ministry became a Food Pantry. For many years, the Food Pantry attracted new volunteers and new members who wanted to serve food insecure people. We became an IRS-designated 501(c)3 non-profit charity in 2019. This followed guidance from the LCUSA reference manual. We evaluated the pros and cons of this change in legal status and presented the analysis to the membership, who voted to become a standalone non-profit charity named the Ladies of Charity Calvert County. Our new legal status has enabled us to increase our fundraising efforts to support the Food Pantry operations - additional donations, grants, and public fundraising events.

Fast forward to the end of 2022. ... We are pleased to say that 510 registered families visited the Food Pantry 3,948 times during 2022, representing 10,198 individuals. We

also provided 756 Holiday Meal "Baskets" to clients, and 3,006 Heart-FELT meals to food insecure children at the local elementary and middle schools. In total, we provided 245,000 pounds of food representing 204,167 meals.



As of our recent member induction, we now have 108 members; about 50 percent of them are active volunteers at the Food Pantry. We are grateful to the Archdiocese and St. Anthony's for launching our organization!

## LADIES OF CHARITY MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA

By Patricia Hanshaw

The Ladies of Charity members graciously prepared and delivered gift baskets and a love offering to Senior Ladies of Charity members unable to attend Mass and LOC meetings.

*Pictured: Pastor, Rev. Andrew B. Jones, President Dorothy Robinson, Parliamentarian Yvonne Elmore, and Treasure Patricia Hanshaw. Officers not pictured are: Vice-President Allyson Holland, Recording Secretary Winona Nelson, Correspondence Secretary Lillie Brown, Chaplain Gwendolyn Lover, and other faithful and devoted members of the organization.*



# LADIES OF CHARITY, GALLUP, NEW MEXICO

Submitted by Sister Elizabeth Racko, DC

## VALENTINE'S DAY PRAYER SERVICE 2024

**Items needed:** Centered in the middle of a table around which the women gather, is a clear glass vase with glass marbles at the bottom, filled with water and an assortment of different flowers.

On Valentine's Day bouquets of flowers are frequently given to loved ones. Thus, God gives us Ladies of Charity, like flowers, to his Beloved Poor. It goes like this:

The vase is the organization of the Ladies of Charity, the bylaws, the general monthly meetings, the committees. The glass marbles at the bottom are the wisdom and spirituality of our founders, St. Vincent de Paul and St. Louise de Marillac, of Catherine Harkins and all the Ladies of Charity, who have gone before us, and of our patron saints: Blessed Mother Mary, and St. Elizabeth Ann Seton.

The water is our Baptism in Jesus Christ that sustains us for good works and love for the poor and each other in humility, simplicity, and charity.

The flowers were previously chosen, and all as different as possible, to be in this bouquet, each chosen like a Lady of Charity of this gathering to be given as a sign of love.

They are similar in that they all have a flower, stem and leaves, yet they are different, even if there are look-alikes.

Cut the bottom of the stems so they can fit into the vase more securely and receive better nourishment.

So too, each of us trim ourselves by humility, simplicity, and charity to fit in better, to get along better, and to be part of a compatible group.

Look at the flower you like best for yourself to take home representing yourself.

Now look at the flower you least prefer, representing perhaps someone who, for you is difficult to understand, or who has characteristics you do not prefer.

Pass the bouquet around. As it comes to you, say a quick, silent prayer, and then choose that flower you least prefer (or another if your unpreferred one has already been chosen). It will represent that person.

Take it home, put it in water, and pray for that person.

As it begins to wither, you can return it to nature outside with a little prayer of thanksgiving that we are all chosen by God to be part of His bouquet of Ladies of Charity given by him as a sign of His Love for the Poor.





Continued from page 6 ►

face major economic and social crises that include the severe effects of the Russian invasion of Ukraine causing disruptions to energy, food and finance systems. The polycrisis is framed by the direct and indirect effects of climate change and the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. The numbers of people living in extreme poverty is elevated, with countries in the Global South being most affected along with families headed by women.

Within the 78th session of the General Assembly, September 18-19, were reserved for the *Sustainable Development Goal Summit*. This event involved heads of state and high-level ministers. At the midway point to Agenda 2030, the Member States reviewed and reignited the Commitments made in 2015 and sought ways to accelerate progress toward the Goals, as more than 30 percent of the goals are stalled or progress has regressed.

The Vincentian Family was looking forward to this session of the GA not only because of reigniting focus on the SDGs, but also because of the anticipated release of the first ever Secretary General's report on Homelessness (A/78/236) "Inclusive Policies and Programmes to Address Homelessness." The Vincentian family collaborated with others through the Working Group to End Homelessness (WGEH) to promote a resolution in the Economic and Social Council in 2020, and the General Assembly in 2021. The General Assembly resolution required the Secretary General to report to the Member States on progress on the issue of homelessness in this Session. Hopefully, the 78th session will produce a resolution that will require biennial reports on homelessness to the General Assembly.

On October 5, the WGEH offered a Parallel event just following the SC Report to the UNGA. The event was titled, "A Future We Want: A Home for all." We gathered over 200 people, 50 attended at the Church Center on UN Plaza, while others attended virtually. The purpose of this event was to highlight the complexity of homelessness as experienced by women with children, review progress as shown in the Secretary General's Report and recommit to moving this issue forward. In many ways the Vincentian Family played a prominent role in this event, from the planning, content and financial support of the FAMVIN Homeless Alliance. Natalie Monteza, Coordinator of the 13 Houses Campaign was a featured speaker and residents of the Daughters of Charity program AFAVI, in Seville, Spain for survivors of Trafficking and Welcome Home Project in Parramos, Guatemala helped us understand the difficulties women face who are homeless because of migrant trafficking and as a result of a natural disaster. The Polish Ambassador to the UN and a Director from UN Habitat were also panelists. The outcome was more focus on homelessness and commitments to work on this issue at the UN.

The world is facing many crises involving climate change, economic uncertainty, food shortages, and energy. These current crises are hitting the most vulnerable the hardest, through no fault of their own. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goal Summit as well as the Summit of the Future planned for 2024, reaffirm and reiterate commitments to seeking lasting

solutions to eradicating poverty, creating full employment and decent work for all, building more inclusive societies and protecting the planet. This midpoint towards the 2030 Agenda is an opportunity to reassess and reinvigorate efforts to achieve the SDGs.

As we look for new solutions, words like solidarity, collaboration and the common good are raised. These words are at the heart of Catholic Social Thought. They also underpin the many human rights documents at the UN and the emphasis on multilateralism. The discussions of multilateralism have also included the need for building trust, relationships, and respect within and among nations. "Multilateral cooperation is the beating heart of the United Nations, its *raison d'être*, and guiding vision." (Secretary General Antonio Guterres) As representatives of the AIC, we will continue to place people at the center of development, and work to ensure that the policies and programs at the UN are "leaving no one behind," especially the most vulnerable as they are encountered by the Ladies of Charity throughout the world.





## JUNIOR LADIES OF CHARITY FOR JUNIOR MODERATORS AND ALL THOSE INTERESTED

Chris Young  
Servicette Editor

Sharon Terwelp, LCUSA Director of the North Central Region, and Chairperson of the LCUSA Juniors Committee, moderated an afternoon workshop during the LCUSA Assembly in Buffalo, to gather Jr. Ladies of Charity moderators and all those interested in forming a junior ladies group. All of the Jr. Ladies of Charity information is listed in the ARM online on the LCUSA website <https://aic.ladiesofcharity.us/>.

The women in the workshop gathered in a large circle, each speaking about their individual groups, what they were doing, what was important to them, and how they are recruiting girls.

The Jr. Ladies of Charity consists of girls in sixth, seventh, and eighth grade; they are 12 to 14 years old. It was said that some of the young girls have moved on to become Ladies of Charity. The significance of having a Jr. Ladies of Charity group is “that young people can so easily be distracted from the principles set by St. Vincent about service to others; they get caught up in the materialism of our society,” said Sharon. “Once they have an opportunity to serve those in need, or help the elderly in nursing homes who might be lonely, or the poor in a food pantry, they realize without a conscious effort how much their help is appreciated, and in turn start to feel good about themselves, and usually want to serve more.”

The junior ladies learn to care about others who are less fortunate than they are including immigrants, refugees, senior citizens, children in their schools, and others,” said Holly Walter, LCUSA National President and a Jr. Ladies leader. “They learn to work together as a team and how to work with adults other than their parents or other family members. They learn how to live their faith and to follow Catholic social teaching, to follow the teachings of St. Vincent and St. Louise in a concrete and constructive way that benefits the community in which they live. They learn that others need them in ways they have never experienced before; most importantly, they

learn how to love others as Jesus asks of all of us.”

Some things the girls have done, include going to an All Souls Day Mass together, made comfort blankets and cards for people there; a gesture to do when someone close dies. Other things the girls have done include going into nursing homes and helping residents address their Christmas cards because the residents still enjoy sending them out, or helping serve at a Thanksgiving dinner, Valentine party, other special events, or activities with other children’s groups, such as interacting with refugee children.

The introduction of the Junior Ladies Handbook is in line with the 2023 LCUSA National Assembly’s theme – “We choose Love.” In it is a quote by Pope Francis who wants us to be “welcoming, available, to be comfortable with others, to be in communion and to generously show peace, even though it is not reciprocated,” Pope Francis said. He then “challenges us to go as love is dynamic. Whoever loves is not to sit in an armchair, but rather go out in enthusiasm and simplicity. Our vocation is to go with a fire of charity rather than to warm ourselves in front of our fireplaces.”

The AIC is an international federation of lay persons, mainly lay women, who work throughout the world to help alleviate poverty in all its forms in the spirit and tradition of St. Vincent de Paul who established the first Confraternities of Charity in 1617 – the Ladies of Charity.

During the nineteenth century in France and Italy, many groups of young girls engaged in various charitable works, but the Junior LOC did not come into existence officially until November 1909. The Junior branch is canonically attached to the Ladies of Charity, and is composed of young women between the ages varying from elementary school through high school. It is determined by each group’s moderator. This branch serves as a potential source of future Ladies of Charity.



# BLESSED TRINITY LADIES OF CHARITY

By Michelle Boehm

## NOURISHING & HEARTS & SOULS IN PITTSBURGH



In a fast-paced, and often disconnected world, the Blessed Trinity Ladies of Charity, located in Pittsburgh, PA, are determined to make a meaningful difference in their community through a simple, yet powerful act by providing nourishment. For the past year, they have worked hand in hand with the Vagabond Mission, an organization committed to serving teens through prayer, bible readings, services, and food, to break the cycle of hopelessness that exists in urban areas, by providing monthly home-cooked meals.

The partnership between the Blessed Trinity Ladies of Charity and the Vagabond Mission exemplifies the power of community involvement and empathy. Each month, the dedicated members of the Ladies of Charity answer a call for meals, generously creating a profound impact on the lives of these individuals.

This initiative goes beyond serving the community. The Blessed Trinity Ladies of Charity strive to foster a spirit of love, kindness, and unity in both givers and recipients. For those receiving the meals, each delivery is more than just sustenance; it serves as a reminder that someone cares.

As Ladies of Charity, we believe that continuing to spread love, one meal at a time, can build a stronger, more compassionate community, where no one feels forgotten or neglected. Together with the Vagabond Mission, we strive to nourish the hearts and souls of urban teens, to create authentic connections and offer hope to those who need it most.





**Ladies of Charity**

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

AIC USA

[aic.ladiesofcharity.us](http://aic.ladiesofcharity.us)

**"TO SERVE RATHER THAN TO BE SERVED"**

**LADIES OF CHARITY NATIONAL ASSEMBLY 2024  
ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI**

**SEPTEMBER 5-8, 2024**

**SAVE THE DATE!**

**"Ladies of Charity, Committed to the Eucharist. Ladies of Charity, Committed to those in need."**



St. Vincent told us, "Go to the poor; you will find God." and "the kingdom of God is peace in the Holy Spirit; He will reign in you if your heart is at peace."

St. Louise says, "Encourage one another, and may your mutual good example, speak louder than any words can."

St. Elizabeth, reminds us, "Live simply, so that all may simply live."



*Strengthen us through the Eucharist, to be more courageous and encourage us to be more humble. Inspire us with the Eucharist to be true witnesses of our Faith. Stir the Spirit that dwells within us, open our hearts to be your hands and voice in this world so that others will be drawn to you.*

**PLEASE JOIN US AND THE LADIES FROM ALL OVER THE COUNTRY IN ST. LOUIS MISSOURI FOR THE 2024 LCUSA ASSEMBLY FOR RELEVANT PRESENTATIONS, PRAYER, MUSIC, AND OTHER ACTIVITIES.**