

# VOICES

## OF CHARITY

Fall 2017

A publication of the SISTERS OF CHARITY  
OF LEAVENWORTH



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SISTERS OF CHARITY  
OF LEAVENWORTH

## Chapter 2016 Directional Statement

*“...we are called  
ever to renew and recreate  
our works and our witness  
uniting justice and charity in our lives  
as servants of the poor.”*

*SCL Constitution, Norm 6*

We, the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth, affirm our call to communion and mission as women of the Church. In the spirit of our heritage, we continue to seek the path of charity and justice in our day.

Impelled by our baptismal commitment, we claim as our own the prophetic mission of Jesus and our call to discipleship.

In collaboration with those who also embrace Gospel values, we affirm our evolving charism and re-envision our ministry and sponsored works to sustain our mission.

Mindful of the fragility of the earth and of the suffering of God's people, especially the exploited and marginalized, we commit ourselves to address these critical needs and their systemic causes.

### ON THE COVER

Sister Dorothy Henscheid and Kenny Davidson with two of the oldest marked trees to the left, Annunciation Chapel to the right and the Mother House in the background.



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Published November 2017

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## *From the* Community Director



Sister Constance  
Phelps

I write this letter, during the autumn equinox, the beautiful transition from summer to winter. Daylight is becoming noticeably shorter, in Kansas the temperature is considering cooling down, and the shedding of leaves from deciduous trees has begun.

This time invites one to curl up with a captivating book. And, so I did. I just completed reading *Originals: How Non-Conformists Move the World* by Adam Grant. The author writes of those who were or are agents of profound change.

Reflecting on Grant's book, I pondered the perspective of change agent regarding not just our place in the world as women religious, but our capability to create new paths, to introduce alternative perspectives and structures. For centuries, women religious have demonstrated what ordinary persons are capable of accomplishing for those in need with initiative, extraordinary determination, creativity, collaboration with others, and God's grace. Women religious have been, were and are agents of change. In other words, "Originals."

We believe God creates a unique soul for each person. Therefore, we should be prepared to be astonished. Astonished by the originality and quality of the paths trod by the Sisters and Associates featured in this issue of *Voices*. While the ministries in which they serve may not be new, the personal skills, talents and gifts they share are original, unique. In some instances, they changed the thrust, direction and depth of their endeavors with their insights, vigor, dedication and passion. They have been indispensable in their ministries providing sage advice and support, all the while bringing levels of grace to enrich the lives of those with whom and to whom they minister.

Those about whom we read in this issue invite us to look through their eyes and see the world in which they are involved and serve. They reveal how ministry can be done simply, humbly, and with love and originality. However, they are not alone. I invite you, our readers, to reflect on the ways in which your contributions are indicative of originality – and prepare to be astonished.

*"Sometimes to be original means we have to spend less time learning  
and more time unlearning."*

Edward Hays, *Prayer Notes to a Friend*

Sister Constance Phelps  
SCL Community Director



# Planting trees, respecting creation

*an SCL tradition*

**From the early days of their history**, the SCLs have valued their natural surroundings. This holds especially true for the Mother House campus in Leavenworth where “trees had been cultivated since the Sisters first held proprietary interest, and reclamation and landscaping began in virgin forest” (*We Came North*, Sister Julia Gilmore).

Today, the two oldest marked trees on the campus grow on the south side of Annunciation Chapel. The huge ginkgo and the sprawling sweet gum were planted in 1917 along with a tulip tree that has since died and been removed. A year earlier, the SCLs had dedicated the new chapel.

Sister Dorothy Henscheid and Kenny Davidson speak the same language: trees and grounds. Sister was campus director from 1999 to 2007. Kenny assumed the role when Sister Dorothy retired.

While poets have immortalized trees with verse, the SCL Community has planted and nurtured them. They dedicated them in memory of loved ones or in honor of those who did the ceremonial plantings.

### From the early years

In her centennial history of the Community, Sister Julia Gilmore (an SCL from 1917 to 1979) writes that a tree on campus was to be named for each Mother Superior. She also notes that at one time in the “front ring” there must have been maple trees named for each of the 12 apostles.

Sister Julia describes Sister Mary Buckner (an SCL from 1867 to 1915) as a great lover of the natural beauty of the campus. Sister Mary wrote the Community’s first history. Sister Julia records that when four black walnut trees – the first of their type – were planted south of the chaplain’s house, “the chaplain voiced his chagrin, saying, ‘Do you want a forest?’ and Sister Mary replied, ‘I would be charmed to have one.’”

Not all SCLs shared Sister Mary’s enthusiasm for the trees. She documented in Community notes that one SCL thought the land should be pasture for cattle. Of which Sister Mary writes, “On this tree question we are a divided camp, but I think and trust that the majority are for the trees to stand as long as the elements will let them” (Sister Mary Notebooks, March 1905). Sister Julia points out that even when there was storm damage, the Sisters used broken boughs as decorations in stage productions.

April 1909 was a boom month for trees on the campus with the planting of two each of several different types. These included American beech, elm, pin oak,

flowering dogwood and many others.

Through the years, the SCL Community added religious statues and shrines to further beautify the campus. Among these were a statue of the Sacred Heart for protection from storms and the Immaculate Heart of Mary shrine.

### Cycle continues

In 1936, a violent storm devastated the campus and its trees. That fall, students of Saint Mary College started a tradition of planting a tree each year to replace those lost. They did this on Founders’ Day (Nov. 11) in memory of the pioneer Sisters and their work.

By the late 1940s, a new orchard replaced the old. Sister Julia writes that “for years not a fruit tree on the grounds had produced . . . Through several successive springs and falls a few Sisters went every evening to the orchard, mulching, pruning, and planting young trees. When the peach trees bore their first crop, it was so large, it could not be cared

for by the kitchen and many bushels of peaches were sold.”

Plantings continued in years that followed. Tree planting symbolized the cultivation of a spirit of unity and charity passed to future generations (from notes in the SCL Archives). As the trees grew and flourished, so did SCL ministries.

### Naturalistic wildlife sanctuary

An article in the *Leavenworth Times* (Nov. 6, 1977) calls Leavenworth “the tree-growing center of Kansas.” That year, Leavenworth County had 40 of 76 state champion trees. A weeping mulberry in front of St. Mary’s Hall at the college was among the champions. The Kansas Forest Service bases this designation on trunk size, height and crown spread of the tree.

Sister Jane Hays was campus director and consultant for grounds of the 200 acres of the Mother House, college and adjacent Saint John Hospital from 1975 to 1999.



Sister Dorothy Henscheid and Kenny Davidson with one of several notebooks of materials collected by Sister Jane Hays, former campus director.



In observance of their upcoming 70th anniversary, SCLs who entered the Community in 1948 donated funds to plant new trees on the Mother House campus. Pictured left to right, seated, Sisters Anne Callahan, Marie Brinkman, Rita Marie Anderson and Edna Hunthausen; standing, Sisters Dolores Erman, Irene Skeehan and Marie Noel Bruch. Sister Rita Marie passed away a few days after the photo was taken. Not available for the photo: Sisters Marie de Paul Combo, Rose Dolores Hoffelmeyer, Marie Madeleine Shonka and Mary Clarita Sternitzke.

## 1948 novitiate class continues the tradition

As a freshman at Saint Mary College in 1947, Sister Marie Noel Bruch remembers the beautiful grove of redbuds across the lane south of Annunciation Chapel. She was enthralled with them when she visited with Mother Mary Francesca O’Shea about entering the SCL Community, which Sister Marie Noel did in 1948.

More recently, Sister has noticed “like us, the trees have aged.”

With the approach of the 70th anniversary of her novitiate class, Sister Marie Noel asked her SCL classmates if they would consider donating to replenish this favorite grove with new redbud trees. Over a short time span, the group raised sufficient funds for the Community to purchase replacement trees not only for the grove but also for other locations on the campus. The grounds crew planted 12 new trees by mid-September with more plantings ahead.

“We’re making the earth beautiful,” Sister Irene Skeehan says, “and keeping the area forested. This is good for the environment.”

Sister Marie Brinkman adds that the trees will further enhance the beauty of the campus that is home to many SCLs.



Sister Jane Hays and two Saint Mary College students do a planting on the campus.

During this time, she became one of only two women certified as arborists in the state. Her love of the land and nature earned Sister Jane the title “Mother Earth.” She died in 2007.

Ahead of the times as an environmentalist, Sister Jane received an award for proper land conservation in 1981 from the Mid-America Association for Conservation Districts. She worked with staff at Kansas State University, Manhattan, to maintain two areas of the Mother House and Saint Mary College campuses in their native condition. This allowed for natural ecological

succession. Less mowing resulted in less fuel consumption; wildlife became more abundant.

Dr. Gustav van der Hoeven, a K-State landscape architect with whom Sister Jane worked, said, “You have a precious heritage here. Take care of it now.”

### Self-taught tree scholars

In 1993, Kenny Davidson joined the SCL grounds crew. Spurred by Sister Jane’s interest in trees, Kenny learned as much as he could from her, from articles she collected and from other sources. He also received training at K-State for certification as an arborist.

He recalls trips to the SCL farm in rural Leavenworth in an old Dodge Diplomat to dig up trees for replanting on the Mother House grounds. He says it was nothing for Sister Jane to stop along the road to retrieve day lily plants or tree seedlings.

When Sister Jane retired in 1999, Sister Dorothy Henscheid assumed responsibilities as campus director. Her dad was a nurseryman, and she grew up in Idaho around plants and



Kansas has experienced bountiful growing seasons this year for flowers, plants and trees that surround the fountain near the statue of Mother Xavier Ross on the Mother House campus.

trees. She kept learning on the job and by experience at the Mother House. She describes the beech tree in front of Annunciation Chapel as the “first [of its type] I ever met.” Being from the West, she also learned by experience about chiggers in humid Kansas weather.

In her early years as campus director, Sister Dorothy oversaw bringing some order to the wilderness areas that had been taken over by creeping vine and brush. She organized notes, materials and extension agency articles collected by Sister Jane into notebooks. Sister Dorothy also took the arborist training.

Over the course of many years, she catalogued the trees on the Mother House campus. She documented donors and in whose name or memory the tree was donated. In addition, on a map of the Mother House grounds, she noted the positions of all the trees.

In 2007, Sister Dorothy retired, and Kenny became campus director. He has a staff of six groundskeepers who maintain the natural beauty of the Mother House and University of Saint Mary campuses year-round – mowing, plowing snow, removing

dead growth and replanting on the approximately 145 acres.

Within budget constraints, he tries to replace any trees that his team removes. Kenny says disease, drought and Kansas storms have been particularly hard on trees over the past four years – more than he’s seen in all his years with the grounds crew.

On a note that’s both philosophical and practical, Sister Dorothy observes, “When you work with living things, they come and go.”

That said, both she and Kenny are proud that the campus has had trees deemed “state champions” by the Kansas Forest Service. The 1917 sweet gum tree held this title for several years until surpassed by another tree.

### Final words

In his 2015 encyclical, “Laudato Si” (“On Care of Our Common Home”), Pope Francis emphasizes the interconnectedness of all creation. He advocates an integral ecology “which respects our unique place as human beings in this world and our relationship to our surroundings.” There’s a relationship that exists between people and nature and trees.

The poem “Rain of Gold” by Sister Mary Janet McGilley, former Saint Mary College president, emphasizes God’s bounty. Sister Mary Janet wrote this poem about the ginkgo tree near Annunciation Chapel for Sister Mary Liguori Horvat in 1966.

Next to the chapel  
stands a tree  
called appropriately  
by the Japanese  
the tree of heaven.  
Ah, a fair tree,  
full-fashioned,  
rounded at the top,  
with fan-shaped leaves  
that are gold coins for fall,  
when, as the legends say,  
all leaves fall at once –  
or to be more precise,  
if less poetic,  
in a day.  
But so they do,  
and each fall we wait  
the golden rain  
from the tree of heaven.  
Which may say something,  
though not all,  
about how heaven sends its gifts,  
about how God is bountiful.



## Beyond All Borders

# Not ‘clients,’ but ‘friends’ *at St. Vincent de Paul Society, Billings*

A ministry of presence, a ministry of time, and charity in abundance characterize the service of Sisters Jean Lind and Clara Scherr who volunteer at the St. Vincent de Paul Society, Billings, Mont.

Sister Clara says, “The people who come through the door know that we’re there, that we care about them, and that they can use our time.” Sister Jean adds, “The St. Vincent de Paul Society calls them ‘friends,’ not ‘clients.’”

Sister Clara volunteers on Tuesday and Thursday mornings at the Charity Office in downtown Billings. She welcomes and visits with the people who come in to use a washer and dryer, receive services or have coffee and donuts. She listens as they express their needs and interacts with several friends daily.

Wednesday and Thursday afternoons find Sister Jean at the St. Vincent de Paul Society Charity Office. She volunteers where needed. This includes helping serve lunch, cleaning up after lunch, and visiting over lunch if friends are inclined to talk. Often, Sister Jean spends time in the on-site chapel named in memory of SCL Sister Daniel Stefani. She reads Scripture or prays the rosary. “People will drop in to pray quietly or ask to pray together,” she says.

### Many services, generous supporters

The Charity Office of the Billings St. Vincent de Paul Society functions as a center of hospitality where people can shelter from the elements during the day in a respectful, friendly environment; visit with friends; or use the bathrooms or a washer and dryer. There is space for storage of bulky personal items.

RiverStone Health providers see friends on Tuesdays and Thursdays for health issues and/or counseling. The St. Vincent de Paul Society also provides job service interviews weekly. In addition, friends can receive referrals or assistance with rent, utilities, job training, clothing, furniture, childcare and basic care items. Transportation funds are available for job and/or medical travel.

Both SCLs credit the Billings Catholic parishes, other churches and individuals with tremendous generosity that helps support the good works of the St. Vincent de Paul Society. A group of women from St. Thomas Parish makes homemade soup to serve weekly. St. Patrick Parish, to which Sisters Clara and



Sisters Jean Lind (left) and Clara Scherr continue the charitable work of St. Vincent de Paul in their volunteer ministry.

Jean belong, prepares boxes of food for distribution through the food pantry. St. Bernard and St. Pius X parishioners do home visits. Individual groups sponsor drives that provide friends with blankets, socks, gloves and hygiene items. Parish budgets allocate funds for operations of the charitable organization. Local stores donate donuts, bread, rolls and vegetables.

### Reaching those in need

Sister Clara attributes the extent of her involvement with the St. Vincent de Paul Society to the Billings SCL Associates. In winter 2009, the Associates began a Saturday brunch at the Charity Office location. Other churches have continued this through the years.

“If it had not been for our Associate program and those Saturday brunches, I’m not sure we would be as involved with St. Vincent de Paul Society as we are,” she says.

The Vincentian charism energizes all the good works and services of the St. Vincent de Paul Society. “This program really is in touch with people who are poor,” Sister Jean says, “and not just economically poor. Yet they are not poor in terms of hope or their knowledge that God will help them.”

Sisters Clara and Jean help keep that hope alive by being bridges and making a difference one person at a time.

# HOPE takes root with love in Uganda

When representatives from the Gotta Have HOPE (GHH) charitable organization arrived in Mawuuki, Uganda, in May, the student band of St. Joan of Arc Primary Day and Boarding School welcomed them with a surprise performance of long-practiced songs, including the U.S. national anthem. This experience was one of many that deeply impressed Sister Paula Rose Jauernig who traveled to the eastern African country as a GHH Board member.

Joyce and Michael Feder and their family established Gotta Have HOPE to improve the lives of children and families in Uganda. Their efforts date to 2008 after the school first opened in Uganda under the leadership of Father Simon Peter Kyambadde, founder and director. There were 300 students, one building, dedicated teachers, one dormitory, no running water and no electricity. That year, the Feders hosted a neighborhood garage sale in suburban Johnson County, Kan., that raised \$2,801.

Today, thanks to the efforts of Gotta Have HOPE and many friends

and supporters (including the SCLs and Associates), the school has 15 buildings, a new library under construction, a 60-seat passenger bus and solar panels, and serves 650 preschoolers through seventh graders. Since 2008, Gotta Have HOPE has raised \$640,000 to benefit people in the remote villages of Uganda. The organization has also been instrumental in linking with many other agencies to help meet needs of the villagers.

Beyond the primary school, this mission has supported agriculture, health clinics, and social and economic growth. The acronym HOPE stands for Healthcare, Oppportunity, Potential, Education.

## Busy mission trip

During the May 28 through June 14 trip to Uganda, the U.S. team assessed the projects funded by GHH. They received a progress report on agriculture including the garden sites and orchard that supply food for the students. They delivered supplies and equipment to local health clinics and assessed future

needs of the clinic that is building a new surgical wing.

At the school, the GHH site-visit team welcomed the delivery of a new tractor and plow; toured the grounds and gardens and saw the bore-hole well with a submersible solar-powered pump that fills the elevated water tanks; and taught students hand-washing hygiene. They also instructed students on use of computers that will be available in the new library compliments of a donation of 200 tablets from St. Joan of Arc Elementary School, Evanston, Ill.

## Vincentian-like spirit

In this 400th anniversary year of the Vincentian charism, Sister Paula Rose sees Gotta Have HOPE as representative of the values espoused by St. Vincent. The organization is extremely collaborative and engages many people to produce results. For example, hundreds of volunteers coordinate and staff the annual garage sale that netted \$51,400 this past summer. Almost 200 families donate items for sale at the event now



At the SCL Mother House, Father Simon Peter Kyambadde, Sisters Regina Deitchman (partially hidden), Edna Hunthausen and Donna Jean Henson, and Joyce Feder watch the DVD that celebrates the 10th anniversary of the garage sale to benefit initiatives in Uganda.



Sister Paula Rose Jauernig plants a tree with a group of young students at the St. Joan of Arc School, Mawuuki, Uganda.

INTERFAITH COMMUNITY OF HOPE

# New building nearing completion



Testing a new pulse oximeter for an oxygen reading, left to right, Sister Paula Rose Jauernig, Sister Harriet Nalubega and Joyce Feder. Sister Harriet is the nurse in charge at St. Luke's Health Center, Kiyinda-Mityana, Uganda. Joyce is the president of Gotta Have HOPE.

hosted at St. Michael the Archangel Parish, Leawood, Kan. Multiple benefactors contribute to GHH on a regular basis. Schools, churches, families and individuals throughout Kansas City and Leavenworth collect aluminum cans with proceeds going toward medications for students at St. Joan of Arc, Uganda.

Similar to St. Vincent in 17th century France, GHH seeks opportunities for impoverished individuals and their communities to develop their full potential and improve quality of life. The goal is that access to healthcare, education, clean water and technology will lead to systemic changes with lasting power.

For all that she experienced and saw over her two weeks in Uganda, what impressed Sister Paula Rose most was that she never heard anyone complain or ask for anything. "Everyone seemed to give of their abundant love for one another," she recalls. "Love and gratitude permeated the whole visit."

As Gotta Have HOPE continues to serve and evolve, the charitable organization *is* giving hope to the people of Uganda with plans to extend its global reach.



The frame goes up quickly on the building.



Inside space begins to take shape.



The building is located at the corner of 3rd and Kiowa, Leavenworth.

It's an exciting time for the Leavenworth Interfaith Community of Hope as construction of the new building advances toward a projected 2017 year-end opening.

The building is enclosed and roofed and framing completed for distinct sections of the interior space for different services. Finishing work continues. The new building will accommodate the information clearing house, day center and housing shelter at one convenient location. Currently, the Welcome Central clearinghouse and day center are in one building, and the shelter on the second floor of another facility.

Sister Vickie Perkins, executive director, says that housing the three entities at one location will lead to efficiencies. Plus, services will be more accessible to clients and volunteers who assist them.

The building capital campaign exceeded its \$600,000 goal. "People, churches and businesses have been very generous with their monetary donations and with in-kind services and labor," Sister explains.

The new building is located at 311 Kiowa, Leavenworth, Kan.



## Re-Markings

# SCL is where God wants her to be



Sister Judy Hayes never wanted to be anything but a teacher. With only a few hours' advance notice, she began her first teaching assignment as a young SCL in 1961. She's been at it – and loving it – ever since.

"I'm where God wants me to be," Sister Judy says. And the faculty and staff of St. Patrick Catholic School, Kansas City, Mo., want God to keep her there as a mentor to teachers, friend to students and jack of all trades who willingly does whatever is needed.

Four days a week, Sister Judy teaches religion to kindergarteners. She walks into the classroom throwing props to the floor to help frame the lesson. The young students get the message loud and clear: People and things – all part of God's creation – matter.

From Sister Judy's perspective, every child matters. "Every child is somebody's treasure," she says. "Kids are so close to God, they can reach out and touch God's face. Yet

so many kids, teachers and parents need somebody in their corner."

Sister Judy has years of experience as advocate and cheerleader, especially for students who may be hurting or neglected. One boy who seemed to be raising himself asked Sister Judy, "Will you teach me how to be a nun of charity?" A sixth-grader who wanted someone to pray with her at the time of her grandmother's illness found a prayer partner in Sister Judy who replied, "That's my specialty." Another little boy needs periodic "Sister breaks" to help him learn by listening.

All of the above and more fill the four days a week Sister Judy volunteers at St. Patrick. She teaches first-grade religion one day a week and does sacramental preparation for second-graders.

In her first year at the school, Lindsay Alexander, kindergarten teacher, brought all of her questions to Sister and bounced ideas off her.

"I don't know what we would do without Sister Judy," Lindsay says.

Pastor Father Robert Stewart credits the SCL with history and experience. "Sister Judy knows what she is doing, and she can guide you. She's tops," he sums up.

Principal Kaci Monaghan agrees. "She is a blessing to us," she adds, "and we'll keep her here."

Over the span of her teaching ministry, Sister Judy served on the faculty at St. Patrick twice for a total of 25 years. She transitioned to a volunteer four years ago. She is very proud of her association with the school and the parish. "I get more from the experience than I give," she says. "I am blessed."

**PHOTO LEFT:** Much to the kindergarteners' delight during catechism class, Sister Judy Hayes gets dramatic using an owl-shaped whiteboard eraser as a phone to talk to God.

**PHOTO RIGHT:** Emerson, a first-grader, absorbs the special attention she receives from Sister Judy.

# Sabbatical

*a fulfilling and busy experience*

Time passed very quickly for Hermana Laura Rumiche Morales during her four-month sabbatical (June 21 through Oct. 15) at the SCL Mother House in Leavenworth.

After completion of her certification in physical therapy and eight consecutive years as director of the Centro San Vicente de Paul, Piura, Peru, Hermana requested time for interior and spiritual renewal.

She found this in Leavenworth along with many other very special opportunities. She appreciated the time for personal and community prayer, but she also maintained a busy schedule. Hermana interacted with Sisters, participated in prison ministry, made mission connections for Peru, and took English classes.

“This was all grace,” Hermana Laura says. “I thank God, the SCL Community and all.”

## A full routine

She began each day of her sabbatical by opening the blinds in her Mother House room and expressing gratitude to God for the beauty of creation. English lessons followed with Sister Donna Jean Henson, then community prayer and Mass. Hermana Laura assisted with physical therapy treatments for Sisters the rest of each weekday. She was



Sister Marie Noel Bruch appreciates the strengthening exercises she learned from Hermana Laura.



Sister Regina Deitchman, who served many years in the Peruvian missions, enjoys her time with Hermana Laura during her sabbatical at the Mother House.

very happy when SCLs experienced pain relief or better movement and felt helped by the treatment.

In the evenings, she enjoyed playing cards and watching movies with the Sisters. Wednesday evenings, she joined SCLs and other volunteers in their prison ministry at Lansing Correctional Facility. Hermana Laura reached out to inmates of Hispanic descent.

## Connecting for Peru

And there’s more. She met with representatives of the company that is donating a camera to facilitate telemedicine services at the St. Vincent de Paul Pastoral Center in Piura. She also connected with two doctors from Peru, who practice in the Kansas City area and who have agreed to provide consultations via telemedicine. One is a neurologist; the other, an internal medicine physician.

Hermana Laura met others who expressed interest in donating their time to serve in Peru. This includes some students in the physical therapy



Hermana Laura Rumiche Morales shares information about the St. Vincent Pastoral Center in Piura during the July Leaven Assembly meeting at the Mother House.

program of the University of Saint Mary. She also appreciated the hospitality of SCLs who invited her to their houses and missions.

## Ministry of service

An Hermana de la Caridad (HCL) since 1989, Hermana Laura began her ministry in the religious formation of children and adults in Piura, Negritos and Talara. In Chalaco and the surrounding area, she was a member of the Justice and Peace and Health Teams that did formation in 80 villages. Hermana Laura next pursued studies and service as a licensed practical nurse in Trujillo.

She returned to Piura where she was a health promoter and then assumed responsibilities for all health promoters in the archdiocese. In addition, Hermana introduced a reflexology program and trained other women in this alternative medicine practice. When the SCL Community began discussions about building a multi-purpose center in Piura, Hermana Laura was responsible for locating land, completing paperwork and overseeing construction. St. Vincent de Paul Pastoral Center opened in 2006. Except for time dedicated to doing outreach ministry in Chalaco, Hermana Laura has been director of the center.

Hermana Laura remains happy and grateful for the gift of her sabbatical and for sharing community and faith during that time with other SCLs. She is also grateful to God for so much love and mercy.

# Living the SCL legacy at

Whether it is sharing Thanksgiving dinner with children of the Child and Family Development Center (“Sister, I smashed that potato myself for you!”) or having dinner with members of the medical staff at their quarterly meetings, Sisters Maureen Craig and Therese Zimmerman live the SCL mission in their roles at Saint John’s Health Center, Santa Monica.

“This is who we are,” explains Sister Therese. “We represent the history and mission of the SCLs at Saint John’s.”

Welcomed and at home at the hospital, the Sisters remained when Saint John’s transitioned to sponsorship by Providence Ministries. They believe the essence of the hospital, its Catholic identity and its sense of service remain the same.

Sister Maureen is the hospital historian, working with new employees and

volunteers. She also serves as chaplain to a number of hospital groups: the Foundation, the Irene Dunne Guild and the Physician Alumni Association. She has been at Saint John’s since 1987 and has a long history with individuals and families.

Volunteering since 2010, Sister Therese applies the unique skills she learned through her years in nursing administration and as a professional counselor. She coordinates liturgy, seasonal prayer services and the observance of special feasts. One of her unique offerings is a Blessing of Hands Ceremony available to individuals, teams or departments. Employees appreciate and look forward to this personalized service.

In addition, both SCLs attend social events that are part of the hospital’s life. One of their favorite events occurs near Founders’ Day in November when they present the Mother Xavier Ross Award to a deserving employee. A week or two later, Sister Therese begins working with a team to arrange holiday decorations for the health center. These colorful Christmas displays bring people to Saint John’s just to view the beautiful decorations.

Staff and friends value Sisters Maureen and Therese. “Our employees and volunteers know us, know we are interested in them, and that they matter to us personally,” Sister Maureen says, “and the feeling is mutual.”

With Saint John’s Health Center marking its 75th anniversary this year, Sisters Maureen and Therese continue to celebrate the SCL heritage and represent the SCL mission.

In front of Saint John’s history wall, Sister Maureen Craig with friends from among the health center’s staff, left to right Victor Reyes, painter, facilities; Sister Maureen; Jason Tarpley, medical director, stroke program; and Judy Chambers Beck, volunteer.



# Santa Monica hospital

Just recently, the pathway to the chapel was dedicated to the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth. The following prayer from the ceremony voices the feelings of all SCLs who have blessed Saint John's through the years.

Almighty everlasting God, we are surrounded in this holy space by souls of over 150 Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth who have served you at Saint John's. Their lives, guided by faith in you, brought about this wonderful place of healing.

We ask that this pathway to the chapel and garden be a place of healing for all who come.



Employees greatly appreciate the Blessing of Hands Ceremony whether Sister Therese Zimmerman (right) does this individually as with Arlene Sandoval, finance, or with a group.



Sister Maureen strikes a familiar pose at the microphone on behalf of Saint John's Health Center, Santa Monica.



Could this possibly be a new ride for Sisters Maureen and Therese?

Photos by Glenn Marzano.



# Re-Markings

OF SPECIAL NOTE

In this section, *Voices of Charity* highlights Sisters, Associates and friends who have earned special honors or been in the news.

## SCL's brother inducted into Cowboy Hall of Fame

With her family and friends, **Sister Marie Carmel Dunning** takes pride in the Sept. 24 induction of her brother Charlie Dunning into the Wyoming Cowboy Hall of Fame. At age 91, Charlie is one of the oldest inductees, but his age hasn't kept him from continuing to run cattle on his ranch in Cheyenne, Wyo., that's been his home for the past 27 years.



Sister Marie Carmel Dunning

Daughter Karen Dunning says that many of her dad's cowboy years occurred in Montana, but that he was back and forth between there and Wyoming. Son Mark Dunning submitted the nomination that traces Charlie's cowboy and cowman history.

The nomination credits Charlie with 85+ years of cowboy experience. In addition to working at and managing different cattle ranches, Charlie competed in rodeo events and horse shows throughout his life. He especially enjoyed team roping. Son Mark writes that his dad competed in the first

National College Finals at the Cow Palace in San Francisco. "Even though he always considered himself a cowboy first, he really made his mark as a cowman," Mark says.

Karen shares highlights that include the article in a 1973 edition of *National Geographic* that featured the Padlock Ranch headquartered in Ranchester, Wyo., for which Charlie worked. Along with its huge acreage, the ranch's other interesting attraction was the chuck wagon and cook that traveled with the cowboys and herds. For his job at Padlock, Charlie earned his pilot's license and did some of his cowboy work by plane. If he spotted a stray calf from the air, he'd make note of the location on a paper sack that he filled with rocks. Charlie then buzzed other cowboys with the plane to let them know he was dropping the message – rocks and all.

Born in Rosebud, Mont., Charlie grew up on several small ranches. Following military service, he attended college where he met his future wife Shirley. They married in 1951 and raised four children – three of whom attended the induction ceremony in Casper, Wyo.

## New archivist joins SCL staff

### Tonya Crawford

has joined the staff of the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth as the new archivist responsible for preservation of historic materials and records



Tonya Crawford

management. She brings 19 years of experience to her new position.

"I'm excited about applying my skills to preserving and sharing the history of the SCLs," Tonya says.

Originally from Alton, Ill., Tonya worked as an assistant archivist for the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul – West Central Province in St. Louis from 1998 to 2005. This work introduced her to the unique features of archives of a religious community.

In 2005, Tonya transitioned to the role of senior manuscript specialist, University of Missouri-Kansas City. Among her duties at UMKC, she reorganized the university archives photo collection; worked to raise visibility of the archives; and assisted researchers.

Tonya has her bachelor's degree in history from Western Illinois University, Macomb; her master's in history with a specialization in archives and records management from Western Washington University, Bellingham; and a master's in information sciences and learning technologies from the University of Missouri-Columbia.

She is a member of the Kansas City Area Archivists, Midwest Archives Conference, Society of American Archivists, the American Library Association, Charity Federation Archivists Group, Archivists of Congregations of Women Religious and American Association for State and Local History.



Charlie Dunning

**THE SEASON OF JUBILEES**

**Sister Carolyn to celebrate 25th jubilee**

**Sister Carolyn Gloege** will celebrate her 25th anniversary as a Sister of Charity of Leavenworth on Sunday, Nov. 12. Friends and family will celebrate with her at an 11 a.m. Mass in Ross Chapel. Originally from Helena, Mont., Sister Carolyn entered the SCL Community on Aug. 30, 1992. She has served in hospital pastoral care and spiritual care departments. Her current spiritual care ministry is in Ross Hall and the Mother House.



Sister Carolyn Gloege

**Golden jubilee a festive time**



Sister Mary Barbara Wieseler with Sister Constance Phelps



Sisters Catherine Ann Bones and Pamela Hinkle

**Sisters Catherine Ann Bones, Pamela Hinkle and Mary Barbara Wieseler** celebrated their golden anniversaries as SCLs on Sunday, June 25, with Mass in Annunciation Chapel followed by receptions at the Mother House. Sister Barbara (above left) received joy-filled congratulations from Sister Constance Phelps, SCL Community Director. After Mass (photo at right), Sister Catherine Ann led the procession followed by Sisters Pam and Barbara and Father Roger Schmit, OSB, celebrant.

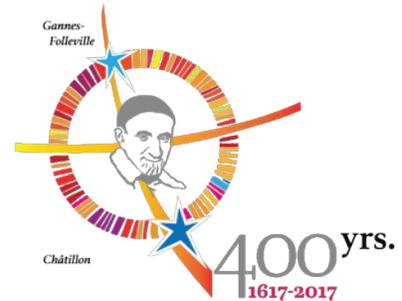
**70th jubilee a happy occasion**

**Sister Mary Rosaleen Driscoll** celebrated her 70th jubilee as an SCL on Aug. 15 at Sacred Heart Parish, Topeka, Kan. During morning Mass on the Feast of the Assumption, she renewed her vows. A reception followed. Parishioners contributed to a financial gift for Sister and Sister Maureen Kehoe, her niece, to take a trip. Sister Mary Rosaleen has been a member of the parish for 28 years and has been on staff of Marian Clinic in Topeka since December 1989.



Father Tim Haberkorn, pastor, congratulates Sister Mary Rosaleen Driscoll with a gift from Sacred Heart Parish, Topeka, Kan.

*Photo compliments of Lawrence Katsbulas Photography*



**Masses, receptions celebrate 400th anniversary of Vincentian charism**



Already Vincentian in spirit, Frances Grabs holds a statue of the 17th century saint. Frances is the daughter of Dawn and Brad Grabs, both SCL Associates.

Sisters and SCL Associates across the country and in Peru observed the **400th anniversary of the Vincentian charism/spirit** with Masses and receptions in parishes in communities in which they live and serve. The celebrations were open to those in any way connected – past and present – with the SCLs or the Vincentian family.

These local observances began in Billings, Mont., on Sept. 17 with the concluding celebration in Chalaco, Peru, on Oct. 21. The majority occurred around the Sept. 27 feast of St. Vincent de Paul.

The celebration of the 400th anniversary of the Vincentian charism/spirit is an international observance throughout 2017. The Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth, several other religious communities and lay organizations trace their roots to St. Vincent de Paul who lived in 17th century France and whose spirit of charity continues across the world today.

Six SCLs were among the 9,500 registrants who gathered Oct. 12-15 in Rome for the Vincentian Symposium. Sisters Janet Cashman, Katherine Franchett, Eileen Haynes, Bernadette Helfert, Mary Jane Schmitz and Elizabeth Skalicky attended this anniversary gathering.

# Totality: a totally good time



- 1 The Mother House front drive provides a great setting for the picnic and eclipse-viewing.
- 2 Sister Susan Chase was one of the coordinators of the total eclipse event along with Sister Eileen Haynes.
- 3 In spite of clouds and rain, these unidentified guests stretch their necks to watch the skies.
- 4 Not to be left out, Mother Xavier Ross has her eyes focused on “the good that is yet to be.”

Intermittent rain and cloudy skies didn’t dampen spirits at the total eclipse event hosted on Aug. 21 at the SCL Mother House. Good food and good people contributed to a good time for Sisters, SCL Associates and guests who gathered around the front drive and fountain of the Mother House. As totality approached, the sky turned dark; crickets started chirping; and people experienced the uniqueness of the few moments. The event closed with a moment of silence followed by a verse of “How Great Thou Art.”

## SCL theologian’s schedule filled with ecumenical presentations

**Sister Susan Wood, PhD**, professor at Marquette University, has a busy fall schedule as a guest speaker for several programs to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation and to discuss ecumenical themes. She was among speakers for the Sept. 14-15 conference titled “1517-2017 – Lutherans and Catholics: Then and Now,” hosted by Georgetown University, Washington, D.C. In addition, Sister Susan spoke at the Reformation Commemoration program on Sept. 26 at Fordham University, Bronx, N.Y. Sister Susan represented the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity on this program.



Sister Susan Wood

In October, she gave plenary lectures for conferences at St. Paul University, Ottawa, Canada, and for the Leuven Encounters in Systematic Theology (LEST), Leuven, Belgium. At the LEST conference, Sister discussed “Eucharistic sacrifice in ecumenical dialogue.”

“Pope Francis and ecumenism” was on the agenda for a Nov. 2 presentation at St. Mary’s College, South Bend, Ind. Sister Susan will also be speaking in November in the Kansas City area and in Richmond, Va. In December, she will participate in the International Baptist-Roman Catholic Dialogue, Waco, Texas, and the U.S. Lutheran-Catholic dialogue meeting in Chicago.

# SCLs have lasting influence on people's lives



Reunited this summer in Leavenworth, left to right, Sisters Marie Carmel Dunning and Anne Callahan and John and Judy Fechter. The two SCLs taught at Cathedral High School, Helena, Mont., when John and Judy were students.

school created a parent services coordinator position for Judy. In subsequent years, the family lived in Minneapolis, and then the “empty nesters” moved to Boston and Cleveland. They have since relocated to Minneapolis where both children and their families now live.

John and Judy earlier reconnected with **Sister Marie Carmel Dunning**, another SCL who taught in Helena. When she visited her sister in the Midwest, Judy also tried to catch up with Sister Marie Carmel.

John remembers that the high school debate team won a lot under Sister’s direction. He believes that the SCLs subtly influenced his life and his character as he grew up. They taught students to do their best and be their best; to have conscious concern for others; and to recognize each individual as a unique person no matter his/her station in life.

Saying that the SCLs are in her bloodstream, Judy values that beyond providing a great education, the Sisters impressed students with the importance of treating everyone with dignity and respect. Of her own sister, Judy comments that Sister Mary Rachel has definitely had a spiritual influence on many lives, including her own.

When they return to Helena for class reunions, the Fechtters hear other alumni express similar sentiments about the SCLs. John says, “Who we are today is due to people like the Sisters who always did things for others.”

## Case in point: The Fechtters

This summer, John and Judy Fechter celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. They also reunited with the SCL to whom they teasingly attribute their marriage that began with a high school romance a few more years ago in Helena, Mont.

John and Judy, the sister of **Sister Mary Rachel Flynn**, were in Leavenworth this summer for a retreat and the Aug. 21 total eclipse. Sister Mary Rachel re-introduced them to **Sister Anne Callahan**, who was music director at Cathedral High School, Helena, when the Fechtters were students there.



Sister Mary Rachel Flynn

In 1963, Sister Anne produced “Music Man” at the high school. Judy and John were cast members. After one performance, John asked Judy out

for a first date. He took her to see the Alfred Hitchcock horror-thriller movie, “The Birds.” In spite of that(!), the two continued dating.

Called the “older woman” by John, Judy graduated high school in 1964; he followed in 1965. They married in 1967. Both completed their undergraduate degrees at Montana State University, Bozeman, where John also earned his master’s. He next received his doctorate in human factors psychology and ergonomics from the University of South Dakota, Vermillion.

Seeking a quality school for their first child, a son who was born deaf, factored into the couple’s job hunt. They settled in Maryland where the state school for the deaf had a stellar reputation. John took a job with the National Bureau of Standards. Judy and her daughter became best buddies commuting 120 miles daily until the family moved to Frederick where the school for the deaf was located. The

If we’ve overlooked an item of importance, please email ([thorvat@scls.org](mailto:thorvat@scls.org)) or mail information to Communications, Cantwell Hall, 4200 South 4th Street, Leavenworth, KS 66048-5054.

## Follow the SCLs on

 **Facebook** [www.facebook.com/sistersofcharity](http://www.facebook.com/sistersofcharity)

 **YouTube** [www.youtube.com/sistersofcharityks](http://www.youtube.com/sistersofcharityks)

 **Twitter** [www.twitter.com/scleavenworth](http://www.twitter.com/scleavenworth)

 **Pinterest** [www.pinterest.com/scleavenworth](http://www.pinterest.com/scleavenworth)

 **Instagram** [www.instagram.com/scleavenworth](http://www.instagram.com/scleavenworth)



# Talents



Sister Mary  
Denise  
Sternitzke

When Sister Mary Denise Sternitzke took the exam (GREs) to qualify for graduate school, she scored identical results in verbal and non-verbal sections of the test.

She attributes this to being both left-brained and right-brained – a duality she traces to her parents. Her mother was right-brained as evidenced by her love of poetry and literature; her dad, the left-brained parent who taught his daughter to think and cultivated her love of mathematics.

## God's hand at work

These two sides of her brain along with a heart dedicated to service and a deep faith have served Sister Mary Denise and her ministries well through the years. Since her initial decision as a senior in high school, she has never doubted her vocation to religious life. "I've always thought this is where God wants me to be," she reflects. She's also seen and experienced God's hand at work in her life in subtle but very real ways.

For example, unbeknownst to the high school senior, the priest with whom she discussed her interest in a religious vocation was the nephew of Sister Mary Baptista Ward, an SCL. Father Patrick Leahy shared information about the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth but also



# translate to ministry

very conscientiously mentioned other religious communities in their discussion.

Then, it happened that two SCLs, Sisters Rose Dominic Gabisch and Mary Ernestine Whitmore, came to Parsons, Kan., where the Sternitzkes lived, to recruit students for Saint Mary College. Parents and daughter met with the Sisters and arranged a follow-up visit to Leavenworth. During that visit, Sister Mary Denise also met Mother Mary Francesca O'Shea. Following high school graduation in 1940, the young woman entered the SCLs.

In her early years in the Community, Sister Mary Denise retained a strong bond with Sister Rose Dominic, who provided academic direction to the young Sisters and taught German at the college. Sister Mary Denise took several hours of German that proved very useful in subsequent years when she worked on her master's in mathematics at the University of Notre Dame; assisted with cataloging German Bibles for the special collections library of Saint Mary College; and taught high school language classes.

## Partiality to mathematics

During her undergraduate studies at Saint Mary College, a scheduling

challenge led Sister Mary Denise to transfer her major from chemistry to mathematics. One course shy of a chemistry major, the SCL went on to teach both mathematics and chemistry to high school students from 1948 to 1986. She loved the courses and the teenagers. One year in Falls City, Neb., she taught four different mathematics classes, chemistry, physics and sewing – the latter a hobby she developed from making her own clothes.

In her dad's footsteps, Sister Mary Denise remained partial to mathematics. "I had a God-given talent to get mathematics across to those who were afraid of it," she recalls. "The students would postpone these courses until their senior year. At that time, they met my determination to teach them mathematics. I also had a mission to get more women interested in this discipline."

Through the years, Sister Mary Denise received National Science Foundation Fellowships to study further in different disciplines. These included physics at Seattle University; chemistry, St. Louis University; and mathematics, Brown University, Providence, R.I.

Based on her specialization in geometry at Notre Dame, Sister Mary Denise received an invitation

from Saint Mary College to teach this course, a requirement for mathematics teachers in Kansas schools. She became part of the college mathematics faculty and taught geometries, among other courses, at the Leavenworth campus from 1986 to 1998.

## Gifts in abundance

With the desire to do something different for her next ministry that involved working with the poor, Sister Mary Denise responded to a job opening for a bookkeeper at Marillac Clinic, Grand Junction, Colo. She had never had a business course, but that didn't deter her. Sister served at Marillac for 16 years. She retired to the SCL Mother House in late 2014.

Her love of language remains a hobby for Sister Mary Denise who has taken up learning Russian. She also enjoys puzzles, games and keeping current with the news.

While she finds it difficult to explain why God led her to a religious vocation, Sister Mary Denise has valued the opportunity to be of service to the Church, to deepen her own relationship with God, and to be part of a Community she loves. Who could ask for anything more?



## Ministries

# Experiential course on aging



At their first meeting, Jacob Clark, sophomore (left), and Will Gering, junior, both from Leavenworth, share information about themselves with Sister Marie Noel Bruch.

Talk to 20-year-olds about aging, and chances are the conversation will evoke a glazed look. Relate aging to their grandmother with a hearing problem or grandfather who uses a walker, and the young adults “get it”—someone they love is facing life transitions.

Nancy King, PhD, professor of psychology at the University of Saint Mary (USM), Leavenworth, teaches “Aging: Issues and Perspectives” to help students become possible resources for their families. The course pre-dates Nancy’s arrival at USM in 1994, and she has modified it substantially in response to student evaluations requesting a more holistic approach.

Nancy describes this as the most experiential class that she teaches. For example, students plan their own funerals. Initially, they strongly dislike this assignment. However, after visiting a funeral home, they

can’t wait to return to class to share what they have learned about the expenses and steps of the process. In addition, they study the Social Security and Medicare programs, and they take on a project to determine where their aging parents will live and receive care as they face health problems and what the expenses could be.

Another key element that Nancy introduced in the course 19 years ago is pairing students with Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth at the Mother House and Ross Hall. Sister Barbara Sellers, retired USM professor and Nancy’s mentor, suggested this idea. Students meet with their SCL partners four times during the semester.

“The Sisters are exemplary when it comes to aging,” Nancy says. “They represent aging as it should be without negativity and fear.”

Students realize that the SCLs are often busier than the young adults are and that they have an amazing outlook on life. In turn, the Sisters find visits with students enriching and enjoyable. At semester’s end, students and SCLs share their experiences during a ceremony that caps the program. As part of the ceremony, students present roses to their Sister partners.

Nancy, an SCL Associate, admits that she has learned a lot about aging from the course and the Sisters. It has also helped form her personal philosophy of aging. “I’m not concerned with how long I live,” Nancy explains, “but with how well I live, with quality of life.”

# pairs students with SCLs



Nancy King, professor, says that she's learned about aging from the course, the students and the SCLs.

## What SCLs say about the aging course

"This is my fifth year participating. It helps us keep in touch with youth. Sisters form friendships with the Saint Marians of today."

— Sister Dolores Erman

"The students want to talk about spirituality – not in a formal way, but as friend to friend. They seem to love getting together. I think we're kind of a grandmother image to them. Also, pairing with the Sisters changes the students' views of what growing older involves."

— Sister Anne Callahan

"The value of the class came through to me one day when I heard one of the students say, 'Well, there's *my* Sister.'"

— Sister Marie Brinkman



Sister Mary Patricia Kielty meets with the two USM students with whom she is paired this year: Kennedy Young (center), a junior from Tulsa, Okla., and Molly Parks, sophomore, Leavenworth.

# New president committed to Cristo Rey mission, Vincentian charism

In his new role as president of Cristo Rey Kansas City High School, John O'Connor is in his element. He is passionate about his job and about educating students. He's excited about engaging people in the mission of this SCL-sponsored ministry by telling the story, raising money and building relationships with alumni and friends. And he's committed to making Cristo Rey an educational force in the urban community.

"I hope that I can inspire everyone around me to be a better person as we continue to foster an environment where our students have the opportunity to succeed academically, socially and emotionally, and to be

enriched spiritually," he explains.

At the top of John's list are initiatives to ensure that students are prepared to enter college with the skills needed to be successful. These initiatives include efforts directed toward literacy and further strengthening the disciplines of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). He believes the STEM courses open up new pathways that some Cristo Rey students may not have previously thought about pursuing.

Equally high on John's agenda is the goal of increasing the number of paid jobs for the high school's work-study model. Each student spends five days a month at a job through

which the individual ideally finances the majority of the cost of his/her education, gains real world job experience, grows in self-confidence, and realizes the relevance of an education. While all students currently have jobs, their employment may be in non-profit agencies that do not fund the positions.

"To secure our future, we must constantly reach out to new financial partners and request their support to keep this work-study opportunity available for young people that society could easily forget," John says while acknowledging the individuals, foundations and corporations that have generously sustained the mission of Cristo Rey.



During a retreat at the Mother House for Cristo Rey faculty and staff, left to right, Sisters Linda Roth and Kathleen Wood, John O'Connor and Sister Maureen Hall. Sisters Kathleen and Maureen facilitated the retreat. Sister Maureen shared the SCL story through her portrayal of Mother Xavier Ross, foundress.

## ABOUT JOHN O'CONNOR

- ▶ Born and raised in south Kansas City, Mo.
- ▶ Attended Archbishop O'Hara High School.
- ▶ Taught and served as athletic director, dean of students and principal at O'Hara.
- ▶ Most recently served as principal of Christian Brothers High School, Sacramento, Calif.
- ▶ Married to Kelly O'Connor, a dyslexia specialist.
- ▶ Has two daughters.
- ▶ Plays guitar, golfs and enjoys time with family.



Cristo Rey senior Imelda Esparza discusses her work-study assignment with John O'Connor.  
*Photo provided by Cristo Rey High School*

As John further immerses himself in this mission and in the Vincentian charism/spirit, he is also grateful to the SCLs who are accompanying him on the journey. He says, “I am fortunate to have Sisters Linda Roth, Maureen Hall, Phyllis Stowell and Charlotte White as my mentors as I grow and learn the ways of Vincentian spirituality.”

Sister Linda is volunteer and alumni coordinator at the school; Sister Maureen, director of mission; Sister Phyllis, a Cristo Rey Board member; and Sister Charlotte, a spiritual advisor for the Vincentian charism. John also has a family connection with the SCLs: Sister Ann Marita Loosen is his mother’s cousin.

John sees the mission of Cristo Rey Kansas City as animated by Vincentian spirituality and grounded in the fundamental service to those most in need – youth who may not otherwise be able to afford a Catholic and college preparatory education.

“With the help of the teachers and staff, our students will be exposed to new and exciting things,” he concludes. “Our goal is that this exposure will help create young men and women prepared to go out in the world and make it a better place for everyone.”

# USM names new provost and vice president for academic affairs

Dr. Michelle Metzinger is the new provost and vice president for academic affairs for the University of Saint Mary (USM), Leavenworth. She assumed her leadership position on July 3.



Dr. Michelle Metzinger

Dr. Metzinger brings nearly 20 years of higher education experience to USM. She most recently served as vice president for academics at Presentation College in Aberdeen, S.D. She began her tenure at Presentation College as the college’s registrar. During her 18-year stint there, she also served as director of information technology, a department chair, academic dean,

assistant professor, program development officer, and director of institutional research and assessment.

In her role at USM Dr. Metzinger will be the chief academic officer as well as oversee all student life programming and faculty recruitment, development and tenure.

Dr. Metzinger holds a bachelor of science in education from Northern State University, Aberdeen, S.D.; a master of arts in teaching from Northern State; and a PhD in higher education leadership from Capella University, Minneapolis.

*Photo from the University of Saint Mary*

# Family environment magnified

## *for USM students with SCL relatives*

It's a mutually beneficial experience for the SCLs and students at the University of Saint Mary (USM), Leavenworth, who have family ties with one another. The Sisters are proud and happy to share in the young adults' lives; the students appreciate knowing they have nearby support and relatives they can turn to, if needed.

### **Sister Julia Golkoski, Julia Harvey and Molly Devine**

Sister Julia Golkoski has two relatives at USM – one of whom she did not know previously. In fact, Julia Harvey, junior from Lake Lotawana, Mo., knew about Sister Julia before the SCL knew about her. Julia's great grandmother was the sister of Sister Julia's dad. As the young woman was considering college options, her grandmother told her about Sister Julia. That family connection and a lacrosse scholarship sealed the deal for Julia to attend USM. During her freshman year, she met Sister Julia at a faith-sharing session sponsored by USM campus ministry.

On the other hand, Sister Julia has known Molly Devine since her infancy. Molly's grandmother was Sister Julia's first cousin on the SCL's mom's side; their family homes were next door to one another. However, Molly had never heard of USM until she received a recruitment letter at her home in Lenexa, Kan. Her mom told her Sister Julia lived in Leavenworth. When Molly applied for a Jubilee Scholarship, Sister Julia wrote a letter of recommendation. Molly received the scholarship as an incoming freshman and is now a sophomore.

Molly first met Julia Harvey at a lacrosse team session. Eventually, both students joined Sister Julia for a meal at the SCL Mother House, a practice they've tried to continue on a monthly basis during the school year.



Julia Harvey, Sister Julia Golkoski and Molly Devine.



Rachel Porter and Sister Mary Pat Lenahan.

### **Sister Mary Pat Lenahan, Rachel Porter**

The story line is very different for Sister Mary Pat Lenahan and her niece Rachel Porter. All five Lenahan female siblings (including Rachel's mother) and one of their aunts graduated from USM. However, the university wasn't Rachel's first choice for college, and no one exerted pressure on her to attend. The financial aid package and the proximity of her aunt were deciding factors in USM's favor.

The Lenahan side of the family is very close-knit, so Rachel and her two siblings grew up knowing their aunts. "I'm glad to have a lot of women in my life," the sophomore from Olathe, Kan., says. "They have helped raise me and influenced my life."

Rachel's bond with Sister Mary Pat grew even stronger this past summer when the college student lived and worked in Leavenworth. They routinely text back and forth and share meals. Sister Mary Pat, who served in the USM education department for 24 years, appreciates staying connected with the college through Rachel and her friends.

### **Networking and support**

Molly says it's nice to have someone "in the know" like Sister Julia who is familiar with the campus and university. "If she asks a question, and I don't know the answer," Sister Julia adds, "I'll find out."

The students acknowledge that their SCL relatives are good sounding boards if they need to work through an issue. They have an extra layer of support with Sisters Julia and Mary Pat that further reinforces the community and family feel of the university.

### **It's a small world**

Rachel and Molly, both sophomores, have become best friends and are roommates this year.



# Faith, family, community matter to Butte SCL Associate

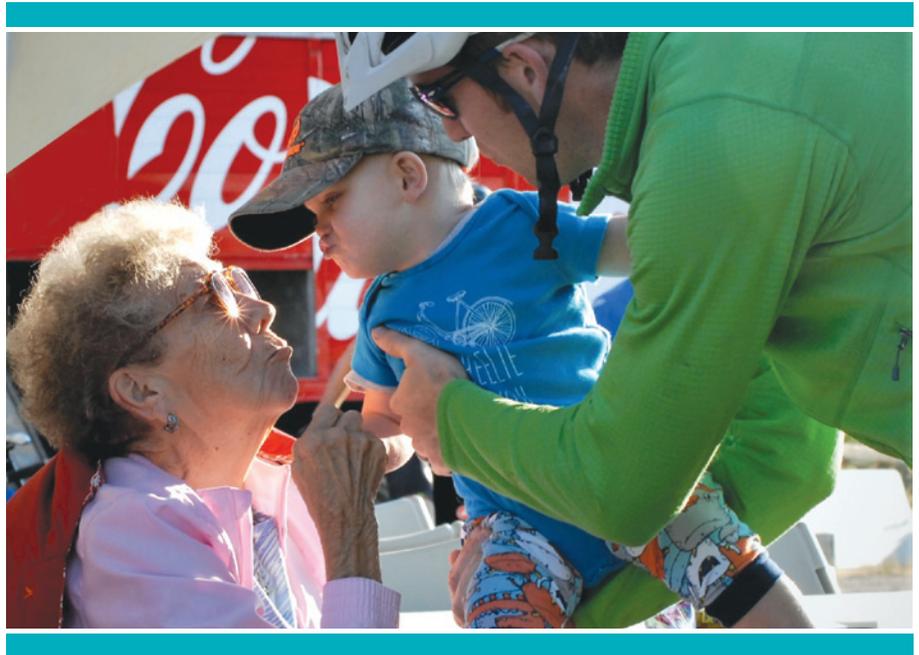
Numbers are telling in the life of Gert Downey, SCL Associate. She was fourth from the youngest in a family of 12 children. She and her husband Timothy Patrick Downey had 10 children of their own – six sons and four daughters. Today, Gert has 27 grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren – all of whom she dearly loves. This year on St. Patrick's Day, she celebrated her 86th birthday.

Richer and more expansive than all the numbers combined is Gert's lifetime of devotion to her faith, her family and her community of Butte, Mont. She was born and raised in Butte and never wanted to leave. Her family home faced the East Ridge, and Gert remains enthralled by the mountains.

Her parents mentored her in the Catholic faith, as did the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (BVMs) in grade school and the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth in high school. Gert treasures those formative years. However, when the BVMs told her mom that her daughter should join the convent, Gert went home and cried. "I didn't become a nun because the Lord put Tim in my life," Gert comments.

She was a stay-at-home mom until she took a job to help pay tuition to send her children to Catholic high school. Gert became a secretary with the Office of Economic Opportunity and retired after 29 years with the agency, serving the last three as executive director.

Tim died young at age 60 in 1988. (He was the brother of Sister Lucy Downey, SCL, now deceased.)



Gert Downey puckers up with great-grandson Ansel.

Gert's family, job and parish activities kept her busy. As she approached retirement, however, she connected with Sister Paula Marie Tweet and made plans to volunteer at Butte Central Elementary. Since 1995, Gert has served continuously at the school, reading with second-graders and helping with other tasks.

It was around that time that Gert became an SCL Associate. She says this new relationship with Sisters and Associates helped cure her loneliness. As a member of the SCL Social Justice Committee, Gert traveled to Leavenworth for meetings. The holiness of the Sisters and their faithfulness to the charism continue to impress her deeply. She values the prayer services she has experienced with the Sisters, and has adopted and adapted both style and content for a prayer group and other uses in Butte.

For over 20 years, Gert has hosted her prayer partners for a retreat at her family cabin in the mountains. She's done the same with area SCL Associates for the past 14 years.

Gert stays active. She takes Communion to residents of a nursing home, serves as spiritual director for the Order of Hibernians, attends daily Mass and is developing a picture album for each of her children and grandchildren. She's grateful for the many blessings she's received and counts being an SCL Associate among them. She expresses gratitude for the presence, dedication and service SCLs have shared with the Butte community, the whole country and beyond. "The Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth have been a great blessing to me, my family and our Catholic community," she concludes.



## Book Review

# Exploring the power of language and transformation through dialogue

Glaser, Judith E. (2014). *Conversational Intelligence: How Great Leaders BUILD TRUST and Get Extraordinary Results*. Brookline, MA: Bibliomotion Books and Media.



by Sister Mary Pat Lenahan  
SCL Candidate/  
Novitiate Director

“To get to the next level of greatness depends on the quality of our culture, which depends on the quality of our relationships, which depends on the quality of our conversations. Everything happens through conversations” (p. xv).

### Three levels of conversation

In the introduction to this text, Judith E. Glaser, the author, establishes the premise that conversations can provide power to influence our neurochemistry (chemical component that stimulates the brain), to express our inner thoughts and feelings, and to influence the way we interpret reality (p. xv-xvi). The author maintains that initial contact often defines the relationship and its development. How often do we make judgments based on our first encounter with another? In reflecting on the power of encounter, Glaser maintains that this book provides the opportunity “to navigate the three

levels of conversations: Level I-transactional (how to exchange data and information); Level II-positional (how to work with power and influence); and Level III-transformational (how to co-create the future for mutual success)” (p. xxiv).

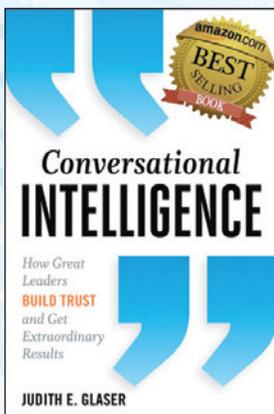
The author asks the reader to be mindful of our conversations and the emotional content we bring to

them. She reminds that conversations have the ability to trigger emotions and that the words we use are very rarely neutral. Words can be loaded with power to encourage another or not, or be positive or not. When we remain mindful of the power of words, we can increase our “conversational intelligence®” and better connect with those with whom we speak. For moving from distrust to trust, Glaser quotes Lao Tzu, “Knowing others is intelligence; knowing yourself is true wisdom. Mastering others is strength; mastering yourself is true power” (p. 33).

### Power of conversations

The author lists several signals to help recognize the power of words embedded in conversations. They include how we react to perceived threats. Do we normalize such behavior, do we choose alternative reactions, are we aware of how we can override our emotional response, and can we transform fear into trust (p. 29)? Glaser maintains that there are two underdeveloped skills in the workplace: the ability and ease with which we can have uncomfortable conversations and the ability to ask “what if” questions. Both of these are applicable to all of our conversations, both professional and personal. Becoming more aware of our conversations can assist us in growth and adeptness in effective conversational intelligence.

However, there are “blind spots” in conversations that can derail the intent of the verbal exchange. These include: assuming that others see, think and





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feel the way we do; interpreting what we hear in such a way that distorts how we see reality; being unable to “stand in another’s shoes”; and remembering what another has said as we remember what we think about what is said (p. 64-65).

Our encounters are powerful. Maya Angelou writes, “I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel” (p. 73).

Conversations can connect or disconnect us from one another. Being mindful of the intent and content of our conversations causes us to reflect and approach them with reverence and reflection. The author borrows from Carl Jung who said, “Your vision will become clear only when you look into your heart...Who looks outside, dreams. Who looks inside, awakens” (p. 101). In the midst of such reflection in conversations, we are called to be open, flexible and agile as we constantly reframe, responding with change in awareness on the part of both the speaker and the listener.

### **Trust is central**

To help navigate the changing currents of daily communication, the author provides a “tool kit” for practical application. Glaser places trust at the center of each encounter with the possibility of co-creating rich and humanizing conversations. She references words of Martin Luther King, Jr., who encouraged, “We must learn to live together as brothers (sisters)

or perish together as fools” (p. 167). In stretching the reader to move forward, Glaser quotes Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, “If you want to build a ship, don’t drum up people together to collect wood, and don’t assign them tasks and work but rather teach them to long for the endless immensity of the sea” (p. 183).

The author invites the reader to help create new realities by reframing reality in a different way; welcoming new conversations; engaging the whole person with storytelling and evoking emotions; and making a space for change (p. 194-197). Since our conversations open us to new encounters and personal awareness and growth, this book provides a great reminder of the power of language, loaded words and the possibility of transformation through dialogue. This book has potential benefit for everyone. It could be especially helpful for professed Sisters because we all live and work with one another, for SCL Associates in their ministries and family lives, and for all of us as we collaborate in ministry.

This text is a very worthwhile reminder that our presence and relationships leave imprints on our lives and legacies as human beings. We are constantly connecting with one another during each dialogue and encounter. We convey our true respect and care for one another by what we say and how we make others feel. In this way, we make our moments and encounters meaningful, and this is how we are remembered.



## Vocations

# New setting, great fit for vocation ministry

Always on the go and always building relationships, Sister Vicki Lichtenauer, SCL vocation director, has a new home base as part of the team of the House of Charity, New Orleans.



The House of Charity is a collaborative initiative of the Sisters of Charity Federation committed to engaging volunteers in rebuilding efforts in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and offering opportunities for vocational discernment. Sister Monica Gundler, one of the founders of the House of Charity, has also continued to serve as vocation director for the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati.

“It’s a great fit,” Sister Vicki believes, “and similar to the environment of Xavier House in Kansas City, Kan., where I previously lived. We offered an intentional community there and an inviting house for young women discerning vocations and for other young people interested in service.”

Sister Vicki moved into the House of Charity on Aug. 29 in the midst of Hurricane Harvey rains and flooding. She joined other

teammates for the Come & See Weekend, Sept. 1 through 4. Targeted to women ages 18 to 45, this experience offers time for prayer, service, input, discussion and reflection about vocations to religious life.

Autumn months bring students on fall break service trips and the 10th annual Nuns Build hosted by the House of Charity with sisters, family and friends invited to help with rebuild efforts. The new year will start with another discernment opportunity followed by spring break service trips, including one of students from the University of Saint Mary (USM), Leavenworth. Between times, Sister Vicki anticipates networking with campus ministries of colleges and universities in the New Orleans area; maintaining ties with Midwestern colleges; and offering Busy Student Retreats.

She also plans to introduce People of Hope monthly dinners – a practice begun at the Kansas City Xavier House. These dinners will bring together young adults involved in volunteer ministries in New Orleans for socialization and prayer. Maddie Inglis, a Jesuit Volunteer Corps member, who previously served in Kansas and who also relocated to New Orleans, will join Sister Vicki in coordinating these gatherings.

In addition to Sisters Vicki and Monica, staff members at House of Charity include Sister Claire Regan, Sister of Charity of New York, and Sister Peg Johnson, SCL, the most recent addition to the team. This group forms the core community at the house that can accommodate up to 14 students or other guests on service trips or for discernment.



## Blessings! ¡Bendiciones!

# What's involved in discerning a vocation?

In the discernment process, a person considers the options, balances the advantages and disadvantages, and carefully examines the consequences.

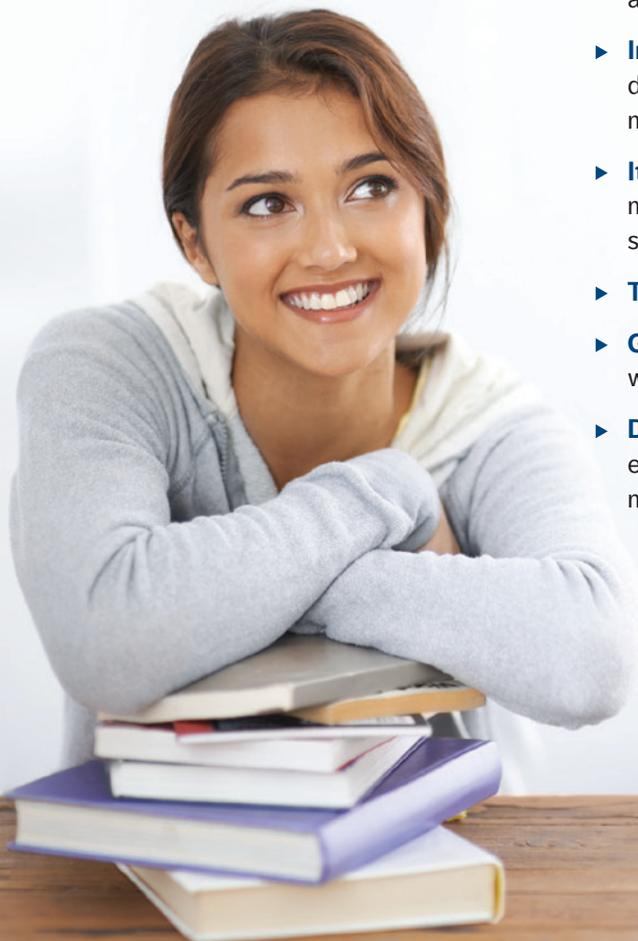
“How will I know...what is good, right or best? How will I know what God is calling me to?”

*United States Conference of Catholic Bishops*

In an article titled, “Ten things to know about discerning a vocation,”

Father Christian Raab, OSB, offers 10 pieces of wisdom from his own discernment journey.

*Content adapted from full article at [VISIONvocationnetwork.org](http://VISIONvocationnetwork.org)*



- ▶ **God calls:** Discernment is different from simply making a decision about a career path or lifestyle. Discernment starts in faith – acknowledging God as the source of vocation, involving God in the decision-making process through prayer, and actively listening for God's will.
- ▶ **Vocation is a two-way gift:** God gives the gift of a vocation; the person discerning gives of himself or herself to God and others.
- ▶ **God preserves a person's freedom to make choices related to vocation:** People have the freedom to marry, enter religious life or remain single. They have the freedom to pursue different lines of work. God helps in the discernment process.
- ▶ **Self-knowledge is important:** An awareness of personal gifts and weaknesses can help in gaining a sense of which vocations are possible for an individual and which are probably not wise paths to take.
- ▶ **Christ is the way, the truth and the life:** An authentic Christian vocation is always rooted in being a disciple of Jesus Christ.
- ▶ **Involvement in a faith community can be beneficial:** It helps in discernment to get involved with the faith community and to try different ministry opportunities.
- ▶ **It's okay to ask for help:** No one can discern a vocation alone. Friends, ministers, family members and parishioners can be helpful sources of support and insight.
- ▶ **There will be some “blindness”:** Vocation must be a gift made in faith.
- ▶ **God writes straight with crooked lines:** God can do great things with weak human beings.
- ▶ **Discernment is not a vocation:** There comes a time in the process of exploring what a person wants to do with his or her life that the discerner must take a risk and try something.

**For guidance in the discernment process  
or more information about the SCL Community,  
contact Sister Vicki Lichtenauer, director of vocations,  
at [vickiL@scls.org](mailto:vickiL@scls.org) or 816-718-2660.**



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