

V O I C E S

A quarterly publication of the
SISTERS OF CHARITY
OF LEAVENWORTH

of Charity

APRIL 2006



Advocating for Butte's air, soil, water

COVER STORY . . . PAGE 11



SCL Associates

NEW SECTIONSEE PAGE 19

SISTERS OF CHARITY OF LEAVENWORTH
2004 - 2010 DIRECTION STATEMENT

We, the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth,
who love the poor,
hear a cry and feel an urgency in these times
to unite our voices and to speak out,
to live and move as women of hope.

Charged by the spirit born in us of Vincent, Louise and Xavier,
and strengthened by our life together in community,
we step into our future with a renewed sense of mission.

As women called to risk for the reign of God,
we choose to nurture relationships of hope:

with one another

by creating authentic communities that welcome,
support and challenge
by strengthening our South-North connections
by clarifying and enriching the SCLA-SCL relationship

between leadership and membership

by developing community structures that lead to more
participation, collaboration and accountability
by learning about our community's sponsoring role
and works

with the Church

by sustaining dialogue with and by caring for the Church
by engaging in theological reflection and study among
ourselves and with our neighbors

with the global community

by responding to human and environmental issues
through personal choices and communal actions
by joining our voice with justice-centered organizations

with the earth

by embracing our need for full communion with all creation.

As a community of believers, we open ourselves
to the presence of the Sacred in each of these relationships.

As Sisters of Charity, rooted in Christ and united in our convictions,
we claim our responsibility as gospel-centered women
and stand with all who suffer, who grieve, who hope.



contents

from the Community Director

2 Sister Joan Sue Miller

Re-markings

- 3 Many hats for Sister Ann Schumacher
4 SCLs highly visible in diocesan Church roles
7 Retreats scheduled at Marillac Center
Ross Hall renovations nearing completion
8 OF SPECIAL NOTE
Highlighting special honors and 'in the news' items
-

LeavenWords

13 Friendship spans years and the globe

Sponsored Ministries

- 14 Spring 2006 regionals provide overview of sponsorship
Associate experience invaluable to hospital executives
15 USM resonates with students
16 Home celebrates 123 years; develops new service
Cristo Rey 'wish list'
-

Beyond All Borders

- 17 Agenda of hope characterizes Millennium Development Goals
Peru has presence on website
18 Progress with building in Peru
Four SCLs join protest against military facility
New book recounts SCL history in Latin America
-

SCL Associates

- 19 Fall 2005 Regionals strengthen SCL/A relationship
20 What does it mean to be an SCLA?
-

Blessings! ¡Bendiciones!

- 21 Another dimension of Vincentian charism
-

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Sister Maureen Hall, *Community Councilor*
Sister Linda Roth, *Community Councilor*
Sister Nancy Bauman, *Community Councilor*
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COVER STORY

Heart of the Matter



Environmental justice
drives concerns 11

A continent away –
challenges with mining 12

BVM Associate advocates . . . 12



SISTERS OF CHARITY
OF LEAVENWORTH

COVER PHOTO: Sister Mary Jo
McDonald is pastoral minister
at St. Ann's Parish, Butte, Mont.,
and an advocate for environmental
justice in the community.

Editorial Advisory Committee:
Sister Marie Brinkman
Sister Margaret Ellen Johnson
Sister Mary Jo Quinn
Sister Susan Rieke

Editor:
Therese Horvat, SCLA
WTGG Consulting

Designer:
Rosie Holderby
Cole Design & Production

Cover Photo:
Walter J. Hinick
Butte, Mont.

Comments and story suggestions appreciated. Email to thorvat@scls.org; mail; or call 913-758-6541

from the Community Director



Sister Joan Sue Miller

As we move prayerfully through Lent in anticipation of Easter and spring, I hope that your time is holy time with many blessed moments.

During this season of renewal, I remain grateful to the sisters for supporting my choice of 100 days of sabbatical at Sangre de Cristo near Santa Fe, N.M., at the end of last year. Our group of participants included 34 sisters, brothers and priests from 17 different countries. We lived in community and focused on examining and blessing our lives of ministry and developing ways of being and doing that will be effective in the years ahead as we continue compassionate involvement in the world and Church.

It was a refreshing experience. I prayed and hiked and even rappelled down mountains, buoyed by the sisters' support and love. It's only because I have such trust in the sisters that I felt I could respond to the Spirit's call to "let my land lie fallow" – a bit as a sign of Jubilee.

It has been wonderful to see so many sisters and Associates during our Spring Regional Wisdom Gatherings. In response to our Chapter Direction Statement, we have gathered to learn more about sponsorship of the SCL ministries. The gatherings have included information from leaders of our sponsored works as well as discussion of new ways that religious communities are approaching the demands of sponsorship.

Keeping connected with our hermanas in Peru, we celebrate the Chuschi convent blessing with them and wish them much happiness in their new home. We have also received photographs of the building of the St. Vincent Center in Piura and posted these to our website. We are predicting an early May blessing of this center.

Sharing this good news of our sisters in Peru is a sharing in mission by all of us. We gratefully acknowledge the work of Sister Rose Dolores Hoffelmeyer who has captured the spirit of that mission in the newly published *We Heard the Call*. This book describes the founding and history of the South American SCL missions. The sisters in Peru received the book in Spanish and are enjoying seeing themselves in print. What a great gift to our community!

As SCLs and Associates, we have long treasured sharing our stories. I hope that you find this edition of *Voices of Charity* rich in that tradition.

May every day of this holy season of reflection allow each of us to take "a long, loving look" that will deepen our vision to see how all things are interconnected and are of God, who will make "all things new."

Sincerely,

Sister Sue Miller
Sister Joan Sue Miller

Re-markings



Many hats for Sister Ann Schumacher

Sister. Doctor. Volunteer. Mentor.

When Sister Ann Schumacher is not busy ministering as a doctor at Exempla Saint Joseph Hospital, Denver, Colo., she is busy ministering as a doctor in a number of other important settings.

“I hope to influence
the way these
young physicians
practice medicine
and work with
the underserved,”
Sister Ann said.
“I try to instill them
with a sense
of obligation to society.
I hope the witness
of my presence
contributes to that.”

She volunteers one evening a week at Clinica Tepeyac, where she provides medical care for persons who are underserved. Two mornings a week through a partnership of Catholic Charities, Stout Street Clinic and Exempla Saint Joseph, Sister Ann sees patients who are homeless at Samaritan Shelter.

This past year, Sister Ann was elected secretary of the International Association of Sister, Brother and Priest Physicians. The organization’s mission is to promote collegiality among religious who are physicians. While some religious congregations – like the Medical Missionaries and Maryknoll – may have several physicians, most do not. For example, Sister Ann is the only SCL who is an M.D. She said the members of the association “reinforce one another in ministry and keep the focus on the patient as a blessing.”

Sister Ann was a doctor before she became an SCL. After she became a family physician, she joined the Navy. Later she worked briefly in private practice and then for a large managed care organization.

While a member of a parish in Olathe, Kan., Dr. Schumacher began considering a religious vocation. She met some Franciscan Sisters who introduced her to the Benedictine community and eventually to the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth. In 1992, the young woman met her first SCL at a pool table in the recreation room at a vocations retreat!

That led to an invitation to the Leavenworth campus. “I fell in love with the place,” Sister Ann recalled. “I looked at different communities in Kansas, Nebraska and Missouri, but I kept coming back to Leavenworth.”

She entered the SCLs in August 1994 and made final vows on Sept. 2, 2001. Today, Sister Ann works with physicians in training at Exempla in Denver, affiliated with the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth Health System. She is full-time faculty in the hospital’s medical residency program and mentors beginning physicians in the outpatient clinic setting, in the hospital and in the community.

*Women are a rich leadership resource for the Catholic Church
in the United States not only in theory but in practice.*

— *Women and Jurisdiction, An Unfolding Reality*
Leadership Conference of Women Religious, 2001

SCLs highly visible in diocesan Church roles

Along with many other gifts, members of the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth (SCL) have long demonstrated that leadership is among their talents. Through the years, sisters have been administrators of hospitals, principals of schools, executive directors of agencies and chairpersons of boards of directors.

With the expanding roles of vowed religious and lay men and women in today's Church, several SCLs currently serve in key positions at the diocesan level in Colorado, Kansas and Montana. They are living proof that women have increasing decision-making responsibilities that affect persons, property and policies of the local Church.

Key roles in pastoral planning

Sister Lynn Casey was appointed chancellor of the Diocese of Great Falls-Billings, Mont., in August 2005. Sister Lynn left the comfort zone of health care where she had ministered in leadership roles for 26 years. In addition to her responsibilities as chancellor, she serves as executive coordinator of the diocesan pastoral council, the bishop's liaison in the planning process and a member of the diocesan outreach team. She believes that she influences decisions through support and counsel to the bishop and the outreach staff.



Sister Lynn Casey

Returning to her home state was a major factor in Sister Lynn's decision to accept this new ministry. She also believed that her leadership skills were transferable to this Church ministry. She added that "the Catholic imagination that will catapult us into the next dimension of Church which is struggling to be born can benefit from a variety of talents, and women bring a particular sensitivity for that."

Sister Lynn quickly became immersed in the diocesan planning process to help re-imagine what the future Church will look like in parts of Montana that are largely rural.

She primarily provides pastoral council workshops, consultation and arbitration and supports the spiritual development of leaders and parish teams. One of Sister Lynn's main goals in the pastoral council workshops is the further development of lay ecclesial ministry roles and reclarification as these roles transition to lay leaders.

• • •

Pastoral planning is the major responsibility of **Sister Rita McGinnis**, director of pastoral planning and delegate for religious for the Diocese of Helena, Mont. Sister Rita assumed these roles in May 2005. She had earlier (1993-1998) served as director of the pastoral office of the Helena Diocese.

The diocese covers 51,922 square miles; is rural with no urban, metropolitan areas to speak of; and has a population of 66,500 Catholics. The last formal planning process in the diocese dates to 1988. More recently, Bishop George Thomas convened a diocesan pastoral council with widespread



Sister Rita McGinnis

representation and the mandate to develop a pastoral plan for the diocese. Sister Rita works with the bishop and the council to facilitate a highly collaborative and engaging process that will involve input from all parishes and missions of the diocese. The plan will shape direction and priorities for the next five years.

In her role as delegate for religious, Sister Rita works with the religious of the diocese as the bishop's liaison. She brings the religious together to celebrate jubilees in the fall and for interaction with the bishop in the spring.

Sister Rita is also working with the presbyteral council and personnel board to implement a mentor program for young pastors and a pastoral assessment process to give feedback to priests of the diocese. She believes that previous diverse ministries have prepared her for this new position.

Sister Rita values the invitation to "be at the table" in Church leadership positions. "We exist within the Church – not outside it," she noted. "If we can be of service and be effective within the structure, we can make things happen."

Leadership of school offices

Sister Jean Martin Dawson and Sister Elizabeth Youngs both serve in leadership positions in diocesan school offices – Sister Jean Martin as superintendent of schools for the Great Falls-Billings Diocese and Sister Elizabeth as associate superintendent for the Denver Archdiocese.

Sister Jean Martin is in her ninth year in the eastern Montana leadership position. She described her role as one of supporting principals of 15 schools including three high schools and a total of 2,000 students. Another important part of her work is to encourage the schools to be clearly Catholic and to ensure religious formation of all teachers and administrators.

The school superintendent sees her ministry as very consistent with the mission of the SCLs and the Church in that "education gives people freedom to make choices." Sister Jean Martin is proud of the fact that the diocese has reopened a high school in Great Falls in response to parents who want a Catholic education option for their children.

• • •

In the Denver metropolitan area, Sister Elizabeth has responsibilities as the lead contact person for 37 elementary schools. This involves visiting all schools and working with principals on goals and evaluations. Additionally, she oversees curriculum development, North Central accreditation and alternative teacher licensure for the entire diocese. She also supervises pre-school programs.

Sister Elizabeth considers Sister Baptista Ward as her role model. This SCL (1887-1980) was instrumental and innovative in ensuring continuity in schools where the sisters served over the course of many years. Sister Elizabeth said that if she can be available to principals, be an energizer and a listening ear to them, she can empower the principals to support teachers who then can best serve the students.

Focus on adults

Adult faith formation is the focus of Sister Eileen Hurley, director of the office of lay ministry for the Diocese of Great Falls-Billings. Sister Eileen has served in this role since August 1999. Her top priority is lay ministry formation.

This includes a wide range of well-defined programs – many for the purpose of cultivating lay leaders in parishes. Sister Eileen coordinates a 30-credit hour certificate program in conjunction with the University of Great Falls. She teaches three courses and oversees each student's practicum.

Sister Jean Martin
Dawson

Sister Elizabeth Youngs



Sister Eileen Hurley

She also coordinates and teaches some courses in the Tempus program of 200 hours. This program is open to individuals interested in adult faith formation. Persons who complete this program can move into “Kairos,” a 30-hour, non-credit college course.

With a Bible and books in tow, Sister Eileen takes to the highways of eastern Montana in a diocesan fleet, 4-wheel drive vehicle to carry out her ministry. She also facilitates a lay preaching program, a growing necessity in rural communities. She conducts a summer retreat, chairs a committee that dispenses grants for continuing faith education in the diocese, serves as liaison for pastoral administration of the diocese, and supervises campus ministry in Billings.

“I love what I do,” Sister Eileen said. “I get to be with people, living my faith and helping them live theirs. I am challenged by some of them and challenge them as well!”

A pastoral perspective on legal matters

Sister Virginia Louise Bartolac is administrator for the tribunal of the Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas. She is also coordinator of the Metropolitan Tribunal and serves as a judge in this appeals court for marriage cases of the dioceses of Wichita and Dodge City in Kansas. She received her doctorate in canon law from Catholic



Sister Virginia Bartolac

University in 1989. Since that time she has had 16 years in related diocesan ministries and has earned a master's in theology degree.

Sister Virginia was appointed to her administrator position in October 2005, the first person to fill this post for the northeastern Kansas archdiocese. While many people associate canon law solely with annulment cases, Sister Virginia described it as encompassing all dimensions of Church life, since it upholds the faith and values put forth in law. She considers it important for persons in tribunal ministry to have a pastoral background. “This is a ministry of healing and reconciliation,” she elaborated.

She oversees various types of marriage cases and works with and trains parish advocates to help them respond to inquiries

about the annulment process. She values the ministry as one that reaches out to persons in times of great need. It clearly has a legal dimension, of necessity, as the tribunal protects rights given in canon law. For these varied reasons, Sister Virginia considers her work a ministry of justice and compassion.

Archivist enjoys ‘super sleuthing’



Sister Dolores Brinkel

Official and historic records are near and dear to **Sister Dolores Brinkel**, archivist of the Diocese of Helena, Mont. With a background in American history and the author of three books on her family genealogy, Sister Dolores is in her element.

She maintains records for the diocese on behalf of the chancellor; she also collects artifacts and paperwork, catalogs them and assists with research. She does what she terms “a lot of sleuthing” at times and finds the job “kind of adventuresome.”

For example, Sister Dolores discovered a painting on fragile, blotter-like paper rolled up in a wooden trunk only to learn that it was the coat of arms of the first bishop of the diocese. Sister Dolores connected with a conservator in Denver who carefully pieced the treasure back together. She also discovered a reel of highly flammable, one-inch film in a metal canister. She made a contact in Hollywood and found someone to transfer the film to another medium for historic preservation of a memorial service for the diocese's second bishop who died in 1925.

Sister Dolores sees a link in her work as archivist with the tradition of the SCLs in Montana. She likes helping people to explore their own roots and to understand what has formed the diocese.

Retreats scheduled at Marillac Center

Marillac Center, on the campus of the SCL Mother House, offers a year-round schedule of different types of retreats. For more information on any of the retreats listed below, contact Sister Mary Loretta Beier, 913-758-6513 or mlbeier@scls.org.

DATE	TOPIC	FACILITATOR
May 26-30	Meditative Journal Retreat	Brother Joseph Schmidt, F.S.C.
May 26-June 4	Directed Retreat (English or Spanish)	Father John P. Foley, S.J.
May 26-June 4	Journal Directed Retreat	Brother Joseph Schmidt, F.S.C.
May 28-June 4	Communion with All of Creation	Sister Lucy Slinger, F.S.P.A.
June 9-18	Directed Retreat	Sister Karen Guth, S.C.L.
June 9-18	Directed Retreat	Sister Marilyn Peot, C.S.J.
June 11-18	Directed Retreat	Sister Dominique Long, S.C.L.
June 11-18	Relationship with God, Self and Others	Father Thomas Schloemer, S.J.
July 7-16	Directed Retreat	Father Jim Costello, S.J.
July 9-16	Praying with Mystics	Sister Therese Elias, O.S.B.
July 9-16	Directed Retreat	Sister Patricia Sullivan, S.C.L.
July 28-Aug. 6	Directed Retreat (English or Spanish)	Sister Mary Pat Johnson, S.C.L.
July 28-Aug. 6	Jesus Christ – the Same, Yesterday and Today and Forever	Father John Krenze
July 30-Aug. 6	Seeking with the Women of the Gospels	Sister Karen Guth, S.C.L.
Sept. 29-Oct. 8	Directed Retreat	Father Tom Nelson, C.M.
Sept. 29-Oct. 8	Directed Retreat	Sister Dominique Long, S.C.L.
Sept. 29-Oct. 8	Directed Retreat	Sister Patricia Sullivan, S.C.L.
Oct. 1-8	Directed Retreat	Sister Karen Guth, S.C.L.
Oct. 11-20	Directed Retreat	Father Tom Nelson, C.M.

Ross Hall renovations nearing completion

Renovations of Ross Hall are nearing completion with several enhancements including built-in storage space and a private telephone in each sister's room.

Residents had the opportunity to choose from a palette of colors for new bedspreads and original artwork to complement the color scheme. Sister Rita Anderson provided the paintings to beautify the surroundings. Workers repainted resident rooms and hallways. The fire alarm system and the nurse call system were upgraded.

Members of the committee overseeing the renovation were Beverly Armstrong, Sister Marianna Bauder, Ray Krueger, Sister Sue Miller, Sister Rita Smith and Pete Zink.

OF SPECIAL NOTE

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

A 'dream come true'



After 39 years as a Sister of Charity of Leavenworth, **Sister Marie Loretta Modrcin** reports that her "dream has come true." As a secretary and office manager in high schools, she always wanted to be a teacher of younger children. Now she has the wonderful opportunity to do that in the religious education program of Blessed Sacrament and Our Lady and St. Rose parishes in Kansas City, Kan.

Sister "Gretta" (above right) team teaches with Rejane Cytacki, an SCL candidate (left). They teach seven children, ages 3 to 6, every Wednesday evening. Sister Gretta said, "I've always felt like I missed out on something when I would listen to the stories of my fellow sister teachers. I can see now how our lives are touched in our teaching and listening. What a thrill for me and I hope for the children I teach each week. I guess you are never too old to have your dreams come true!"

Volunteers needed for Mother House, Ross Hall

The Mother House and Ross Hall are both seeking SCL/A volunteers to

assist with a variety of tasks. Volunteers can be part-time or full-time and can contact Sister Rita Smith (913-758-6518) if they are interested in accompanying or driving sisters to appointments; staffing the switchboard; working on special projects; giving Mother House tours; or sewing.

Sister Lucy Walter (913-758-6517) is recruiting volunteers for special prayer opportunities and for connecting with individual sisters or small groups (e.g., cooking and hosting a dinner; writing letters; taking a sister shopping in Leavenworth or to a restaurant, walking on campus, playing board games one-on-one, etc.)

'Hero in healthcare' honored

Sister Margaret Marie Mitchell was honored as a "Hero in Healthcare" by *Ingram's* magazine in mid-March. Sister is a pastoral care associate at Truman Medical Center Lakewood in the Kansas City metropolitan area.



In her role, Sister visits all departments and regularly spends two days a week with long-term care patients and two days with acute and critical care patients. She said, "The most important thing I do is the one-on-one work with the patients."

Sister Margaret Marie spent most of her early years in education then transitioned to parish ministries. Since retiring from education, she has helped

organize and manage parish Eucharistic and visitation programs for the elderly, the homebound and the hospitalized. She has been a pastoral care associate for almost 10 years.

Honorary Croatian consul recognizes SCL contributions



At the celebration of the dedication of the new Croatian consulate in Kansas City, the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth received accolades for their involvement in the cultural and educational heritage of northeast Kansas.

Dr. Judith K. Vogelsang, the newly named honorary Croatian consul, is an alumna of the University of Saint Mary. She hosted the dinner celebration and program with the ambassador of the Republic of Croatia to the United States.

Pictured above: Sister Mary O'Rourke, Dr. Judith Vogelsang, Sister Maureen Hall, Sister Barbara Kushan.

Sister Carmen's art on display

Sister Carmen Echevarria has placed 15 prints of her paintings on the Art Exchange, a website that sells art. To access the website, go to www.art-exchange.com.



Sister Carmen is making a special offer to SCL/As of \$25.00 for each print (plus \$5.00 shipping and handling, if necessary). Interested persons can contact Sister Carmen by calling 913-758-9763 or by email at carmenscl@yahoo.com. Those in the vicinity of the Mother House can make arrangements to obtain the prints in person by contacting Sister Carmen in advance.

SCL a trailblazer in Santa Fe

Sister Phyllis Stowell has been named the new principal of Santo Niño Regional Catholic School, the newest school of the Archdiocese of Santa Fe, N.M. Scheduled to open in fall 2006, the school can serve 537 students and will have 64 full-time staff. The decision to build the new school was based on a two-and-a-half year study assessing the status of Catholic education in Santa Fe.



Sister Phyllis currently serves as principal of St. Francis of Assisi Cathedral School. She launched the process to receive the first Quality New Mexico (Baldrige) recognition, The Piñon Award. She has also served as principal of schools in the Midwest.

Book a special legacy to women's roles in Butte

MOTHERLODE, Legacies of Women's Lives and Labors in Butte, Montana features accounts of the important role women have played in the history of this mining community. SCLs and Associates are strongly represented with two chapters authored by SCLs and another featuring an SCLA.

In the section of the book entitled "Women's Work," chapter four is taken "from the archives" and authored by Sister Seraphine Sheehan (1911-2003). The topic is "Sister Mary Xavier Davey: Nun Rethinks Our Education."

Sister Dolores Brinkel, current archivist for the Diocese of Helena, wrote the chapter "The Sisters of Charity: Mining City Health Care Pioneers," appearing in the "In Sickness

and in Health" section. **Gert Downey, SCLA**, is profiled as "making a difference" for love and justice in a later section of *MOTHERLODE*.

The book was edited by Janet L. Finn and Ellen Crain. It can be ordered through an independent bookseller or from Clark City Press, Livingston, Mont., 1-800-835-0814 or www.clarkcitypress.com.

Health care ministry recognized

Sister Marie Damian Glatt retired from her position as regional mission integration director for the Providence Health System last fall. Russell E. Danielson, Providence Health vice president and chief executive-Oregon, said of Sister Marie Damian, "Her accomplishments have been many, but perhaps none so great as her tireless work to ensure the mission of the Sisters of Providence continues by teaching lay leadership what it truly means to be part of a Catholic ministry."

Sister Marie Damian had served previously as president/CEO of the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth Health System.

• • •

Fourteen years of service as executive director of Caritas Clinics, Inc., were recognized during a reception honoring **Sister Ann McGuire**, who left her position in late October 2005. Sister Ann administered staff and services provided by Duchesne Clinic, Kansas City, Kan., and Saint Vincent Clinic, Leavenworth, Kan. Milestones under her leadership included a major renovation at Duchesne and relocation of Saint Vincent Clinic to better serve persons who are uninsured.

Amy Falk, former development director, succeeded Sister Ann in the leadership position.

• • •

Sister Mary Aloys Powell was recognized by Exempla Healthcare for her 55 years of experience in health care at an event hosted by the health system in October 2005. Sister Mary Aloys, who currently works with the Exempla Saint Joseph Foundation, said, "I love the mission and the ministry of health services."



Sister Marie
Damian Glatt



Sister Ann
McGuire



Sister Mary Aloys
Powell

Poet, professor featured

An article in *The Catholic Missourian* (Sept. 16, 2005) featured **Sister Susan Rieke**, Jefferson City, Mo., native, and professor and chair of the English department of the University of Saint Mary, Leavenworth, Kan. One of Sister Susan's poems, "Triduum, 2005," was included with the article.



Visit to Paris shrines coincides with Vincent's feast



A pilgrimage to shrines in Paris, France, on the feast of St. Vincent de Paul last year, capped off what had been a memorable golden jubilee trip for **Sisters John Vianney Martinez** (right) and **Mary Clarita Sternitzke** (left) of Denver, Colo. They prayed at the Basilica of Sacre-Coeur (Sacred Heart) and visited the Chapel of the Miraculous Medal where St. Louise de Marillac is entombed and where the body of St. Catherine Laboure rests.

Next the sisters journeyed to the "Maison Mere Des Lazaristes" where St. Vincent de Paul is entombed. They toured the beautiful Sainte-Chapelle built in the 1200s by St. (King) Louis IX. They also attended vespers and Mass at the Cathedral of Notre Dame.

Volunteer of the year honors to Sister Mary Willoughby



In the Hospice of Leavenworth 20th anniversary newsletter of November 2005, **Sister Mary Willoughby**, a volunteer with the organization, responded to a series of questions. Little did she know that a few days later, her dedication would earn her "Volunteer of the Year" recognition at the annual appreciation luncheon.

Sister Mary has volunteered with Hospice for seven years. She said that it is "an extension and expression of my mission as a Sister of Charity of Leavenworth – to serve the sick, poor, the suffering and aged."

In her volunteer service, Sister Mary visits nursing home residents receiving hospice care. She talks with them, discusses their interests and listens to their stories. "Mostly, it is so they know that somebody cares and is interested in their needs," she added. At the time of the person's death, Sister Mary ministers to the family, attending wakes and inviting survivors to lunch at the

Mother House to celebrate the lives of their deceased family members.

Sister Mary also volunteers for Catholic Community Hospice and for Faith in Action Friendly Visitors.

Sister Daniel Stefani's mark remains on ministries she touched

Inspired by her commitment to serve persons who were poor, the St. Vincent de Paul Society in Billings, Mont., dedicated a room in their facility as the Sr. Daniel Stefani, SCL Memorial Chapel. Sister Daniel had been a member of the Society's Board of Directors and a volunteer during her six years in Billings. **Sister Mary Kathleen Stefani**, her sister, spoke during the ceremony in October that included a ribbon-cutting and reception.

In September 2004, Mount St. Vincent Home, Denver, Colo., dedicated its new school in memory of Sister Daniel. The Stefani School is for children in kindergarten through eighth grade. It serves special needs children requiring more structure and small group instruction.

Sister Daniel served as executive director of Mount St. Vincent Home from 1968 to 1995. She died in 2003.

Pictured below: Sister Kathleen Stefani (standing), and Doreen and Walter Strizic, her sister and brother-in-law.



If we've overlooked an item of importance, please email (thorvat@scls.org) or mail information to Communications, Cantwell Hall, 4200 South Fourth Street, Leavenworth, Kan. 66048-5054.

Environmental justice drives concerns

Sister Mary Jo McDonald is no stranger to mining country. Her origins are in Anaconda, Mont. For the past 22 years, she has been a pastoral minister at St. Ann's Parish, Butte.

For the last five of those years, Sister Mary Jo has been a strong advocate for “environmental justice” in a city and county that she calls home and on behalf of people and families that she loves. With a group of other vocal citizens, Sister Mary Jo has voiced public concern that pollutants from mining are negatively affecting the water, land and air in Butte and in surrounding Silver Bow County.

What are the proposed solutions offered by the group that includes Sister Mary Jo and Fritz Dailey, former seven-term state representative? Reclamation and restoration of the land to useful purposes. Fixing the problems, not band-aiding them. Using innovative technology and resource recovery methods. Holding the mining companies and local, state and national authorities and agencies accountable.

“People today and future generations deserve the best possible environment,” Sister Mary Jo said. “Yet they don’t have the power to change things.”

Sister Mary Jo and Fritz have waged a persistent, albeit uphill battle in a city called the “richest hill on earth.” There is one Superfund decision remaining relative to a \$79 million settlement regarding “priority soils” restoration. Fritz is hopeful that someone – the governor of Montana or another official in a position of power – will listen or read the pleas and act on behalf of the environment and the future.

History of mining in Butte

Gold was discovered in Butte in 1864. In subsequent years, the area evolved into the largest producer of copper in North America. A position paper written by Fritz on the subject of “Butte Priority Soils: A Proposed Solution” (October 2004)



▲ Sister Mary Jo McDonald, Fritz Dailey.

described the area as “an immense ore body with more than 100 years of mining activity.”

The steel gallow frames still dot the landscape, remnants of the pulleys that transported men into the earth to claim its riches. The other most visible remnant of mining history is the Berkeley Pit, a lake-size hole on the edge of Butte’s once booming downtown. From 1955 to 1982, this was an open pit copper mine. When the mining stopped, “dewatering” the mines was no longer necessary; deep-level pumps were shut down; and groundwater in the pit rose to its natural pre-mining levels.

In 1983, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) declared Butte a Superfund site. This declaration identified environmental concerns, responsibilities for cleanup and funding, and the plan for reclamation and restoration.

Today, the Berkeley Pit contains 38 billion gallons of contaminated water – run-off and build-up from the after-effects of mining. Water in the pit has risen to a level of 5,255 feet above sea level, with the level of 5,410 feet designated as critical. The concern with the “pit” is that rising levels of contaminated water could migrate to other water levels and into nearby creeks and streams.

Add to this the mining still in progress and concerns that “tailings” (waste materials from mining) of heavy metals don’t

get into storm water and groundwater or continue to find their way into Silver Bow Creek. Compounding the matter are issues about contaminants in the air from emissions of arsenic, lead, mercury and other metals.

Stewarding the air, earth and water

Sister Mary Jo and Fritz have not been satisfied that the Environmental Protection Agency's proposed plan is adequate to protect human life or streams. They want the cleanup to result in making the land suitable for redevelopment and for Butte's prosperity.

Fritz wants to rest assured that his grandchildren and their children will be able to wade and fish in Silver Bow Creek and families to picnic on its banks.

Sister Mary Jo thinks about the dust that blows and filters into attics and walls; about water that comes down from the hills and that may be contaminated. About how Butte children have tested higher than national outcomes for lead levels in their blood. About the profitability of the mining companies and Butte's continuing efforts to rebuild its economy.

In the end, she continues to advocate for stricter measures because she believes it is the right thing to do and because she wants the best for Butte, its families and its future.

A continent away – challenges with mining

Hermanas de Caridad in Peru have worked with “campesinos” (local people) to close mines they believe will contaminate water and land in the leading agricultural center of Tambogrande.

Sister Janet Cashman explained that historically the Peruvian government has signed an agreement (in exchange for large sums of money) with foreign-owned mining companies. These agreements grant rights to the mining concession without consulting the people. Local residents have expressed their opposition through referendum votes, demonstrations and roadblocks.

Last year, Rio Blancot in the region of Piura became a focal point of attention. A company from England has begun exploration operations in this isolated mountainous region. The wastes from the mountain run toward Piura. Campesinos want the mine to close. Bishop Dan Turley of the Chulucanas Diocese has worked to negotiate a settlement. Other bishops have spoken in support of local farmers throughout the land.

Sister Janet wrote, “There are days of roadblocks and then negotiations. When the negotiations break down, there are more roadblocks.”

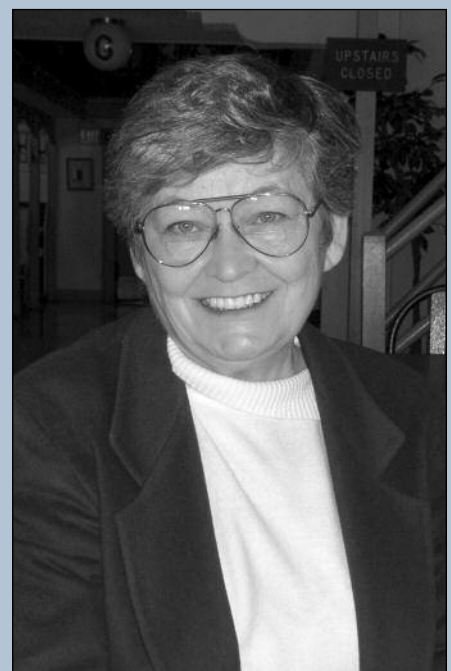


BVM Associate advocates

Mary Kay Craig, an associate of the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (BVM), is a kindred spirit with Sister Mary Jo McDonald. In the mid-1990s, she served on a Lead Advisory Committee in Butte and learned how damaging lead could be to young brains. In more recent years, she and her husband found that they had lead problems in their own home, now nearly 100 years old. When lead was fired and smelted in the mines, emissions permeated attics and walls of old houses.

Over time, this process produced excesses of lead and arsenic and blackened wood – like what was found in Mary Kay's home. Workers with personal protective equipment and clothing used industrial vacuums to do the clean up of the house. One of Mary Kay's greatest concerns remains what she terms the “potential synergy” of all the contaminants and the possible disease that could result from this mix of chemicals.

She's also concerned that contaminated water may be moving downstream from Butte to Anaconda to Deer Lodge. Mary Kay sees her role as an advocate for social justice – trying to change what she perceives as unjust systems and institutionalized injustice.



LeavenWords

Separated by an ocean and many years and equipped with vivid recollections and determination, an Italian citizen and Sister Jeanne Marie Zeugin have forged a friendship.

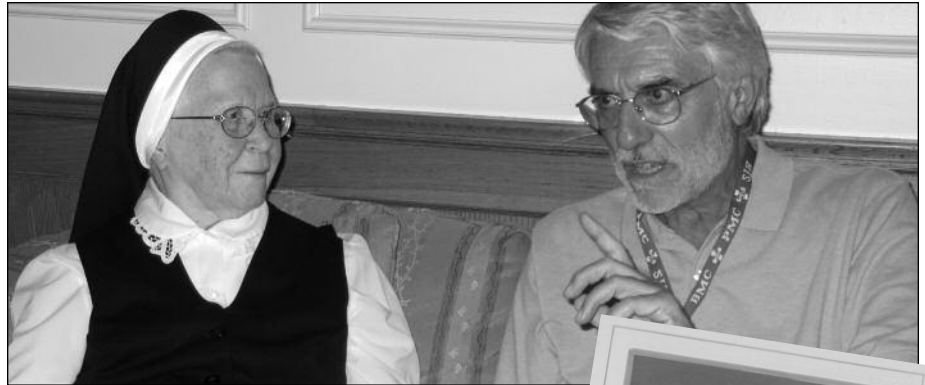
Friendship spans years and the globe

Sister Jeanne Marie's brother Dick was assigned to a B-17 bomber that was forced down outside the Italian village of Cairo Montenotte in 1944. Dick and the other soldiers parachuted to safety only to be subsequently taken prisoners by the Germans. Sister Jeanne Marie recalled that Dick never spoke of this or any of his war-time experiences, including 14 months as a prisoner of war at Stalag Luft I.

As a nine-year old boy, Giancarlo Garelo lived in Cairo Montenotte, a village of 10,000 people. When he heard about the plane crash, the young boy bicycled five miles to the site to see the aftermath of this event of significant proportions for his village. Giancarlo had seen the plane descending and recalled that "it floated down like it was on auto-pilot. I saw the soldiers on a German truck; they were talking and conversing; and didn't seem worried."

Even at that young age, Giancarlo was interested in aviation. As a child, he wrote about the crash in a notebook at school. Eventually, he became a commercial airline pilot. In 1985, a publisher acquaintance invited Giancarlo to write an article for a monthly magazine. Giancarlo told the man, "I have a story to tell you about the plane. Everybody in the town knew about the plane."

And so began Giancarlo's adventure as an adult, tracking down information about the crew of the B-17. He wrote the National Archives to obtain names of crew members and their war-time addresses. He was making international flights and when in New York, he would call names from telephone directories.



▲ ABOVE: Sister Jeanne Marie Zeugin and Giancarlo Garelo.

RIGHT: Dick Zeugin. ►

By the time the Italian pilot began this research, Dick Zeugin had died (1982). Giancarlo traced the Zeugin family name to Leavenworth and began a correspondence with Sister Jeanne Marie in 1988.

When Pope John Paul II announced plans to come to Denver, Colo., in 1993 for World Youth Day, Sister Jeanne Marie's niece, Sister Marianna Bauder (then CEO of St. Joseph Hospital) received two tickets to a special section reserved for dignitaries. Sister Marianna invited Sister Jeanne Marie to join her. "That was an offer I could not refuse," Sister Jeanne Marie remembered. (At the time, Sister Jeanne Marie was working at Saint John Hospital, Leavenworth, Kan.)

She wrote to Giancarlo and suggested that he try to be among the pilots of the Pope's plane. Giancarlo succeeded, and Sister Jeanne Marie and Sister Marianna got security clearance to meet the pilot. The meeting was brief due to a change in Giancarlo's flight plan. It would be two years before he and



Sister Jeanne Marie would meet again.

Over the years, Giancarlo had connected with some of Dick's crewmates. He began to attend reunions of the World War II veterans of the Second Bombardment Association of which Dick Zeugin had been a member. On one of his stateside trips for the reunion in September 1995, Giancarlo traveled to Leavenworth, visited Sister Jeanne Marie and her family, and toured the Mother House.

Last fall, Giancarlo and Silvana, his wife, returned to the United States to attend the annual reunion. Prior to the gathering in St. Louis, they reunited in Leavenworth with their friend Sister Jeanne Marie.

Sponsored Ministries

Spring 2006 regionals provide overview of sponsorship

As follow-up to the 2004 SCL Chapter and in light of a number of changes facing the religious community, the Spring 2006 Regional Wisdom Gatherings have probed the topic of sponsorship.

Members of the Community Council have provided an overview of sponsorship, including its meaning, history, theology and new models of sponsorship being adopted by other religious communities. A video updated participants at the gatherings on the four SCL-sponsored ministries – the University of Saint Mary, the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth Health System, Mount St. Vincent Home and Cristo Rey Kansas City.

Through small group discussions, sisters and Associates identified the need for additional information and shared questions about sponsorship. The regionals also included a report from the fall 2005 sessions.

Associate experience invaluable to hospital executives

In their roles as vice presidents of mission of two hospitals of the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth Health System (SCLHS), LaTisha “Tish” Starbuck and Terry Weinburger feel buoyed in spirit by the fact that they are both Associates of the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth (SCLAs).

Tish currently serves at Saint John’s Health Center, Santa Monica, Calif.; Terry, at St. Mary’s Hospital and Medical Center, Grand Junction, Colo.

Terry and his wife, Ann, are both SCLAs, sponsored by Sister Anne Joseph Swiderski. They are deeply impressed with the charity, humility and simplicity professed by the sisters and respected by the Health System. “While I have worked elsewhere in Catholic health care and religious sponsored ministries, this [SCLHS] is the first system that embeds the charism and values into the fabric of the hospital.”

He said that as an Associate and as vice president of mission and organizational effectiveness at St. Mary’s, he believes that he is “carrying forward the baton of the tradition, heritage and charism of the SCLs.” He considers his job both a career and a calling and feels there is a strong point of intersection in working for the sponsored ministry of the Health System.

Tish described herself as having been formed by the values of the SCLHS and the charism of the SCLs. She first worked at St. Vincent Healthcare, Billings, Mont., as a nurse. From there, she went to St. Mary’s, Grand Junction, and advanced to the position of vice president of patient services and information technology and then vice president of mission.

She recalled that she “wanted the mission job more than anything.” At the time, she was in her “Come and See Year” of discernment for the Associate program with her sponsor Sister Mary Clarice Lousberg. Tish always liked working with people and helping them clarify the meaning, the “why” of their lives. Her faith has been an integral part of her personal journey.

Tish also serves as the System executive liaison with Broadlane, the centralized purchasing organization with which SCLHS partners. In addition to mission, Terry’s responsibilities encompass human resources, employee health services, the employee assistance program, educational resources and spiritual care.



LaTisha Starbuck



Terry Weinburger



Courtney Manago had her sights set on a larger, midwestern Catholic university, but the prospect of a huge debt and distance away from her family swayed her toward the University of Saint Mary (USM) in Leavenworth, Kan. Plus, ever since childhood, Courtney had performed piano recitals in the Walnut Room at the college. She was hooked.



Jeff Swanson, on the other hand, was happily predestined! His grandmother, mother and three aunts had all attended USM as had Sister Mary Lenore Martin, his great aunt. Jeff is from Grove City, Pa., and he didn't apply anywhere else.

USM resonates with students

What both found at USM were faculty and staff who devote individual attention to students. "It's so easy to get to know people on campus," Jeff said. "I feel like a person instead of a digit. It's great to be known as an individual."

Courtney described this as "face time" with instructors. She had an early personal experience of the "heart of USM." Less than three months into her freshman year, Courtney's family home burned. People at USM demonstrated genuine concern, compassion and support.

Courtney and Jeff are both juniors. Courtney is in pre-med biology and pastoral ministry; Jeff is a pastoral ministry major and a vocal music minor. Courtney has aspirations to attend medical school and specialize in geriatric medicine. Jeff may be a liturgist and put his varied talents to good use.

Both are active in campus life and in service projects. Courtney is on the pastoral ministry conference retreat team (giving retreats in parishes in the Kansas City area). She plays soccer, is president of the Science and Math Club and serves as a peer mentor. She has traveled to Guatemala twice for alternative spring and summer break projects

and worked alongside villagers to construct a school and a field house. "This was a life-changing experience," she said.

Jeff is a former member of the Student Government Association, an active voice in USM theater productions, on the pastoral ministry retreat team, vice president of the Science and Math Club and coordinates the liturgical music team on campus. He has made three trips to Kentucky to help rebuild and repair homes as his community service projects.

"I treasure the people at USM," Courtney said. "I don't think this experience can be replaced anywhere!"

Home celebrates 123 years; develops new service

Mount St. Vincent Home, Denver, Colo., recently celebrated its 123rd birthday and is proceeding with plans to offer enhanced services to children and families.

Sister Amy Willcott, executive director, said that the residential facility has been at capacity. Other children are enrolled in the day treatment and school only programs, the learning center and the therapeutic preschool. Plans continue to introduce the step-down program that will occupy the second floor of the main building. This environment will offer smaller group living for children preparing to leave the residential program.

"The smaller group living setting will prepare the children for family living and community involvement," Sister Amy said.

This program has required renovation that includes new living quarters for the children and the addition of a sprinkler system to the entire building. Sister Michael Delores Allegri is leading the planning and implementation of this program.

Cristo Rey 'wish list'

As Cristo Rey Kansas City, a Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth High School, prepares to welcome its first class of incoming freshmen in fall 2006, Sister Vickie Perkins, president, reported a tremendous outpouring of support and interest. She also said that "we are discovering that it takes a lot 'stuff' to start a new school."



For this reason, Sister Vickie, faculty and staff have developed a Cristo Rey wish list and invite friends and their friends to support this exciting new SCL-sponsored ministry. For more information, contact Sister Vickie at 816-457-6044 or vperkins@cristoreykc.org. Items needed include:

- **FURNITURE:** desks for teachers and office; desk chairs; tables and chairs; couches; bookcases; file cabinets.
- **OFFICE SUPPLIES:** copy paper; paper (clean on one side); large paper in different weights, colors, etc., for signs; manila file folders; hanging folders; tabs for hanging folders; printer cartridges.
- **SCHOOL SUPPLIES:** science equipment and supplies; books and media for the library; gift cards for bookstores.
- **MISCELLANEOUS:** new/slightly used business clothes; gift cards to Target, Kohl's, etc.; culturally diverse pictures for halls.

▲ ABOVE: Sister Vickie Perkins and friends at the press conference to introduce Cristo Rey to the Kansas City community.

Beyond All Borders

Agenda of hope characterizes Millennium Development Goals

In September 2000, 189 nations adopted the international Millennium Development Goals, rallying around long-term protection and sustainability of the global family. In the words of Kofi A. Annan, secretary-general of the United Nations, this “constituted an unprecedented promise by world leaders to address, as a single package, peace, security, development, human rights and fundamental freedoms.”

Sister Therese Bangert, SCL social justice coordinator, said that this UN-driven effort has issued regular progress reports on the status of the eight goals. Those eight goals targeted for completion by 2015 are:

- Halve the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day and those who suffer from hunger.
- Ensure that all boys and girls complete primary school.
- Eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education at all levels by 2015.
- Reduce by two thirds the mortality rate among children under five.
- Reduce by three quarters the ratio of women dying in childbirth.
- Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS and the incidence of malaria and other major diseases.
- Ensure environmental sustainability (with specific measures indicated).
- Develop a global partnership for development (with specific measures indicated).

The UN is tracking movement toward achievement of these goals by continents and sub-regions. In a recent publication, Secretary Annan wrote, “the report shows us how much progress has been made in some areas, and how large an effort is needed to meet the Millennium Development Goals in others.”

For more information, visit www.un.org/millenniumgoals/index.asp.

Peru has presence on website

There is a welcomed new addition to the www.scls.org website. Hermana Laura Rumiche Morales has designed and is maintaining a website for the Peruvian missions. Go to the SCL website, click on “español” (at the bottom right of the screen). This will take you to the website and keep you informed of activities of the Hermanas en Peru. (Please note: not all Internet providers allow access to the architecture of this site.)

PROGRESS WITH BUILDING IN PERU

Hermanas de Caridad celebrated completion of the new convent in Chuschi, Peru in late December with a blessing ceremony. Hermana Susana Córdova Castillo, director of Latin American missions, said, "We are grateful to God and to all of the persons who have made the construction of this wonderful and large house possible."

The hermanas started the Chuschi mission in March 2004. They came at the invitation of Rev. Jorge Carlos Beneito Mora, S.J.

Hermana Susana wrote, "I feel that this mission not only opens our eyes to see the reality and the poverty, abandonment and exclusion of the people and the towns, but also to touch and be open to look with the heart and feel and understand that the only thing that has always stayed was and is the eternal fidelity of God. This comforted the people in their pain and in the midst of death."

Sister Regina Deitchman directed construction of the new convent. Hermana Lourdes Abad teaches religion in the high school. Sister Susana visits other villages, assists with liturgies and religion classes.



▲▲ TOP: Sister Lourdes Abad and a worker in Peru.

▲ BOTTOM: The new St. Vincent Center takes shape in Piura, Peru.

Four SCLs join protest against military facility

Sisters Therese Bangert, Paulette Krick, Vicki Lichtenauer and Linda Roth traveled to Fort Benning, Ga., in November 2005 for the annual three days of "Remembrance and Resistance" to close the School of the Americas (now called the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation).

In a newsletter produced on their return, Sister Paulette wrote, "For the last 16 years, people had made this fall pilgrimage to protest the training of military personnel from other countries in illegal and inhumane methods of torture. Now it was our turn to make the journey."

Over 19,000 people gathered at the gates of Fort Benning the Sunday of the weekend. "We joined in prayer, and then a solemn procession began," Sister Paulette said. "A litany of names of people killed by military trained at the School of the Americas was chanted as we marched."

After the two-hour procession, the SCL group gathered at the fence and prayed for peace. For more information, visit www.soawatch.org.

New book recounts SCL history in Latin America

Following up on a conversation 10 years ago, Sister Rose Dolores Hoffelmeyer assumed the task of writing what evolved into the 650-page history of the SCLs in Latin America. Sister Rose Dolores published *We Heard the Call* in December 2005.

A review of the book and a feature about its writing will appear in the next edition of *Voices of Charity*. In the meantime, copies of the book are available (\$20.00 each) in the University of Saint Mary bookstore or can be obtained by contacting Sister Rose Dolores, rosehoffy@hotmail.com.



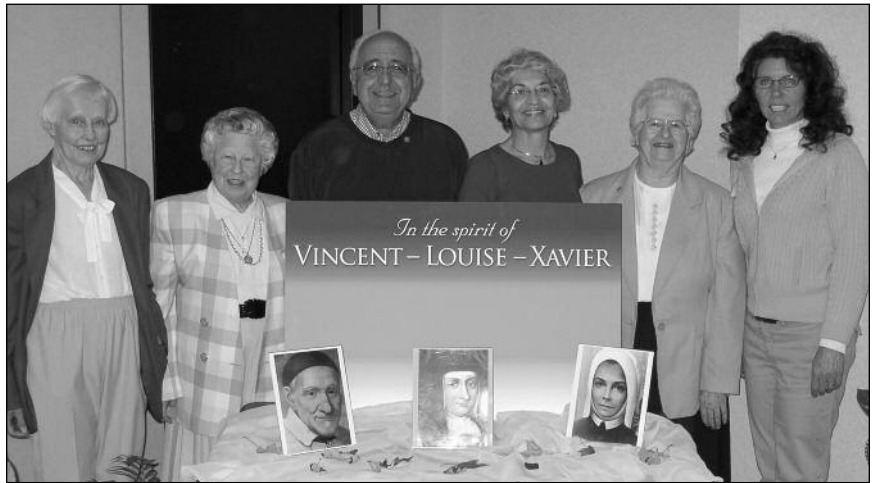
SCL Associates

Fall 2005 Regionals strengthen SCL/A relationship

A tremendous spirit characterized the Fall 2005 Regional Wisdom Gatherings that brought 254 sisters and 80 Associates together to discuss the Associate program and to continue to foster a “relationship of hope.” Discussion and feedback from the five gatherings were synthesized into a report that was reviewed by the SCLA Advisory Board. Following that review, the Advisory Board developed two sets of recommendations: one set forwarded to the SCL Community Council and the second to be acted upon by the SCLAs.

Associates Therese Horvat and Terri Mauton, who facilitated the fall gatherings and who both serve on the Advisory Board, have reported on the fall meetings and recommendations at the spring regional Wisdom Gatherings. They confirmed that the mutuality of the SCL/A relationship was a strong and recurring theme. Other key themes that emerged from the fall meetings included the shared charism, the value of relationships, strength in togetherness, yearning for spirituality, and profound hope for the future.

Recommendations made to the Community Council focused on continuing to cultivate awareness of the SCLA program and inviting SCLAs to be part of committees and events. The SCLA Advisory Board has revised both the criteria for becoming an Associate and the invitation process. That information is being shared with participants at the spring regionals.



▲▲▲ TOP: Sister Mary Walter Swann, Sister Marie Paula Hardy, Rich and Virginia Romero, SCLAs, Sister Mary Aloys Powell, Christine Eitemiller, SCLA – Denver Fall Wisdom Gathering.

▲▲ CENTER: James Kiser, Sue Hart, Gert Downey (all SCLAs), Sister Mary Vincentia Maronick – Montana Fall Wisdom Gathering.

► RIGHT: Terri Mauton, SCLA.



What does it mean to be an SCLA?

Katie Savage (Schlatman), Overland Park, Kan.

There is the camaraderie of the program itself. It is part of my core; it happens to fit. I have skills, and the community and the Associates allow me to explore them. It is formalization of a life with a values-based group.



Katie lives out her SCLA experience in several ways. Impressed by the concept of “give-away/take-away” at the Mother House, she began a similar program at her workplace, a medical transcription organization. Twice a year, Katie and co-workers bring in books, makeup, other items they no longer use and place them on a table for other staff members to select. “It’s one of the highest forms of recycling,” Katie said.

Katie has served on the SCLA Advisory Board and has coordinated development of the Associate calendar. She began the latter as a formation piece to provide important information about the Sisters of Charity. Katie remains active as a member of the Friends of Marillac Board, an advisory group of the Marillac Center, Leavenworth, Kan.

▲ ABOVE: Katie in white with co-workers.

Margaret Malone Faciszewski, Aurora, Colo.

The SCLs influenced my life perspectives. I have always admired them and their qualities of leadership and kindness. I used to think: when I grow up, I want to be like that. These are such marvelous women.

Like Katie Savage, Margaret is an alumna of the University of Saint Mary. She has been active with the Alumni Council in Denver. She volunteers as a patient visitor at Exempla Saint Joseph Hospital and is vice president of the Volunteer Board of Directors.

Last year, Margaret self-published a book, *Well, Hi There! Engaging Stories to Stimulate Personal Growth*. (The book will be reviewed in the next edition of *Voices of Charity*.) She credited several SCLs with influencing her decision to write and publish the book. “I knew that I wanted to do this before I retired,” Margaret recalled. “I was listening to the voice within; the Spirit was driving me.”

Her goal was to write a book that people would read and not just put on the shelf. She wanted to relate simple stories and personal experiences that would amuse and delight, teach and inspire. Her book combines fact and fiction and appeals to the 40-plus age group, more women than men. A portion of proceeds from the book benefits charities including the St. Joseph Hospital Foundation, Annunciation School, Mount St. Vincent Home and the University of Saint Mary.

Books are available at the Tattered Cover bookstores in Denver, Colo., and at the University of Saint Mary bookstore, Leavenworth, Kan.



Sue Hart, Billings, Mont.

Outside of my family, the Sisters of Charity are the most important part of my life. My four kids feel like the SCLs are family to them. There are so many opportunities to deepen my spiritual life, and there is the charism that we’re asked to acknowledge and live by.

Sue cherishes the wonderful and close relationships she has had with different SCLs through the years. She responded generously when Sister Mary Vincentia Maronick requested a volunteer to cook and package food for an AIDS client of her ministry. This led to “dinner theater parties” that Sue and her family hosted for different AIDS clients with a meal followed by movies.

In turn, these good works led to Sue’s daughter volunteering as a driver delivering meals to these individuals and to St. Vincent Healthcare providing meals for the AIDS ministry.

Sue is challenged by the concept of “owning” the SCL charism, but she agrees that she shares it. “I’ve made the charism my ‘own’ in my limited way,” she said.

▲ ABOVE: Sue (left) with Sister Mary Depner

Blessings! ¡Bendiciones!

Another dimension of Vincentian charism



by Sister Mary Jo Quinn

Somewhere along the way, I experienced a “collision” of sorts. In retrospect, the collision was important because it has led me to reflection on the parts of the Vincentian charism we don’t commonly discuss.

Early in my graduate studies, I was sharing a story of a local community celebration of the Eucharist with one of my liturgy professors. He interrupted my story with a series of rhetorical questions: “Why do you celebrate liturgy apart from the parish? Aren’t you a Sister of Charity? Aren’t you acquainted with Vincent’s words: ‘Your cloister shall be the city street, your chapel shall be the parish church’?”

The years of my SCL initial formation were, in a way, “pre-Vincentian,” Vincent being a reference point leading to Mother Xavier through Nashville and Catherine Spaulding. What stands out for me only is the Vincentian call to care of the poor, the widow and the orphan, carried out in the traditional works of education, child care and health care. Our last several general chapters have been especially challenging in directing our mission to the economically poor, especially women and children. And this call has been a gift for all of us.

In my quest to answer my professor’s questions, I began uncovering other dimensions of Vincent’s gifts in our church. A new friendship with a Sulpician cousin led to an awareness that Vincent, along with Father Ollier, founder of the Sulpicians, was particularly sensitive to the special needs of the French clergy. Their successors founded and assisted in the standardization of clergy education and spiritual formation, leading to the modern seminary system. Interestingly, a perusal of the founding stories of various Sisters of Charity often indicates the presence of a Sulpician bishop or priest in the capacity of a spiritual director. And, the founder of the Vincent de Paul Society, Frédéric Ozanam, was recently beatified by John Paul II in 1997 at Ste. Sulpice, the parish church of the Sulpicians.

Vincent’s vision for the renewal of the clergy developed from his understanding that all Catholic faith is

formed and nourished in the parish, in the parish’s liturgical life and in all programs and resources that support that liturgical life. We too have been formed in faith in families and parish communities. Formative liturgy further nurtures that faith, and we come to appreciate the effects of the Sunday gathering around the Eucharistic table.

At our last two chapters, we dialogued a bit about relationships with bishops and clergy. I have been present at enough community dinner tables, often shared with pastors and priest-friends, when wonderful stories have been told, precisely about the many relationships we have formed, individually and as a community, with bishops and clergy. Unfortunately, sometimes we have experienced a disconnect between those good memories and the liturgical life in which many of us regularly participate.

Working with the poor is often difficult and sometimes frustrating, and we accept those challenges. Are we less willing to accept the difficulties and frustrations of ministry within the Church? While I am not currently associated with the staff of a parish, the words of Vincent still guide me to find my chapel in the parish church, to join those others of the church whose “cloister is a city street,” to gather each Sunday to discover together how we might be transformed at the Eucharistic table.

Sister Mary Jo is workshop manager for Oregon Catholic Press, Portland, Ore.

V O I C E S

of Charity



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