

VOICES

OF CHARITY

Fall 2018

A publication of the SISTERS OF CHARITY
OF LEAVENWORTH



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'Servant of Servants'**
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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 Lucy Walter, coordinator of the Mother House and Ross Hall, is all smiles surrounded by seasonal decorations and party supplies that contribute to a festive environment for events and celebrations.



in this issue

Published December 2018

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Community Director

Sister Eileen Haynes, First Councilor

Sister Amy Willcott, Councilor

Sister Phyllis Stowell, Councilor

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From the Community Director



Sister Constance
Phelps

As I write this letter, the Thanksgiving celebration is over. Even so, it affords me the opportunity to express gratitude to the Sisters and Associates featured in this issue of *Voices* who responded to the call to use their talents to serve.

Their stories illustrate the woven web of connection to our SCL mission and charism. I use the image of weaving because weaving is not an act in which one creates. Weaving is an act in which one uncovers a pattern already there. One has to look back to see the pattern.

This issue of the SCL magazine uncovers the pattern of life stories that manifest the creativity, works and efforts of minds, hands and hearts committed to bringing what is possible to reality. Evident are the patterns of commitment, passion and energy to give of self, to serve others whatever the need. In addition, those featured use opportunities and their abilities to create and weave new patterns.

In the past, Sisters uncovered many patterns of service. The contributions of women religious helped change a young nation, and along the way, the nation changed them. Change is ever-present in our lives, as you will note in the article addressing the SCL Community Leaven Assembly. What do not change are the mission and living the Gospel message.

This issue of *Voices* introduces those who embrace the Gospel message; answer the call to use their gifts, skills and talents to serve; and live the charism. By reading these stories and learning how to uncover patterns, perhaps others will be inspired to come to a new way of understanding the call to serve. The past, present and future are parts of the same dynamic life, but the present is the only one we can directly touch.

During the weeks of Advent in preparation and anticipation of the Christmas season, may we take the appropriate time to discern how best to share our personal gifts with others.

*We live in a time of rare privilege
a time*

*when new edges
and new horizons
and new possibilities
are egging us on...*

— Maya Angelou

Sister Constance Phelps
SCL Community Director

2016-2018 Biennial Report

*“It is wisdom to pause, to look back and see
by what straight or twisting ways
we have arrived at the place we find ourselves.”*

— Mother Xavier Ross

Inspired by these words of Mother Xavier Ross and organized around themes identified in the Chapter 2016 Directional Statement, this Biennial Report highlights the past two years of SCL history.

Re-envisioning our ministry and sponsored works

- ▶ Sisters met in small Leaven Groups year-round and for larger Leaven Assembly gatherings in 2017 and 2018. Representative of the Community's collaborative governance process, these sessions led to identification of areas of critical interest and exploration of ways to affirm the evolving charism. In July 2018, SCL Associates met simultaneously to vision future plans.
- ▶ Cristo Rey Kansas City High School, an SCL-sponsored ministry, welcomed John O'Connor as its new president at the start of the 2017-2018 school year.
- ▶ St. Vincent de Paul Pastoral Center, Piura, Peru, an SCL-sponsored ministry, observed its 12th anniversary in 2018 with a three-day celebration involving

patients and staff. The center is a health and multi-service facility.

- ▶ Leaven Ministries, the sponsor of SCL Health, commissioned Michael DeFreece (2016), Rita Turley (2017) and Sister Amy Willcott (2016) as new members, and Lydia Jumonville (2017) as the new president and CEO of the health system.
- ▶ Leavenworth Interfaith Community of Hope (LICH), a ministry that evolved from a needs assessment prompted by the 2010 SCL Chapter, continued to serve as a vital resource for persons who live in poverty. On Jan. 22, 2018, the organization blessed and opened a new facility that brought its services under one roof. Several SCLs and Associates volunteer at the facility that provides a resource clearinghouse, a day center and an overnight shelter.



During a commissioning ritual in Annunciation Chapel, Sister Maureen Hall blesses John O'Connor, new president of Cristo Rey Kansas City High School.



Children benefit from the early stimulation services provided by St. Vincent de Paul Pastoral Center, Piura, Peru.



Long involved in foreign missions, Sister Janet Cashman now serves in Ramacca, Sicily, Italy, where she works with migrants.

Seeking paths of justice and charity

- ▶ Sisters Janet Cashman and Mary Patricia Johannsen completed their mission assignments in South Sudan. Sister Janet has remained in a mission field since November 2016, working with refugees arriving in Sicily, Italy.
- ▶ John Shively was named the new coordinator of the Office of Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation in 2018. John fills the position that Sister Therese Bangert held since 2002. See article on page 28.
- ▶ The SCL Community joined other Sisters of Charity Federation congregations in a February 2017 statement expressing solidarity with faith leaders in opposing executive orders of the U.S. president that create fear and anxiety among immigrants and

refugees in the United States. The statement affirmed opposition to religious intolerance and racism.

- ▶ Sisters and SCL Associates had the opportunity to participate in interest groups to address critical needs including immigration and refugees, human trafficking, the environment, threatened access to healthcare, and spiritual hungers today. Creation of these groups was an outcome of the July 2017 Leaven Assembly. The discussion and work of the groups continue.
- ▶ Sister Melissa Camardo was a panelist with world leaders in the movement to eradicate human trafficking during a meeting at the United Nations on May 22, 2018. Representing LifeWay Network where she ministers, Sister Melissa shared the perspective of women religious working to empower and heal survivors of human trafficking.



Sister Michael Delores Allegri signifies her alignment with the message during the 2018 tour of Nuns on the Bus during its stop in Denver. This year's tour focused on tax justice.



Among pressing social justice issues, Sister Sheila Karpan (second from left) advocates for nuclear disarmament.



While in Rome attending the Vincentian Symposium in October 2017, Sister Eileen Haynes greets Pope Francis.

Affirming our call within the Church

- ▶ Sister Constance Phelps, SCL Community Director, was elected one of two United States delegates to the International Union of Superiors General (UISG). UISG encourages dialogue and collaboration among religious congregations within the Church and larger society. In November 2017, Sister Constance participated in the meeting of the UISG Council of Delegates in Manila, the Philippines.
- ▶ Sister Eileen Haynes was elected to the board of directors of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR), effective Jan. 1, 2018. Sister Amy Willcott is treasurer of LCWR's Region 13.
- ▶ Terri Butel, director of SCL Associates, joined the board of the North American Conference of Associates and Religious in 2018.

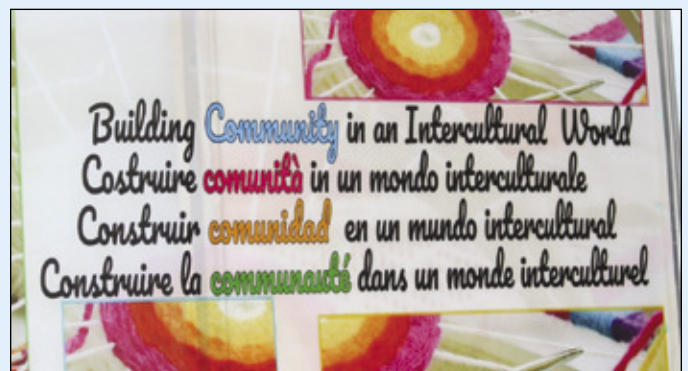


Delegates to the International Union of Superiors General carry pieces of cloth symbolic of weaving global solidarity. (Sister Constance Phelps, SCL Community Director, is behind the person with the red shoulder bag.)

- ▶ In April 2018, Hermana Clorinda Timaná Martinez was elected vice president of CONFER, a group of religious in leadership in Peru. Hermana Clorinda directs SCL Latin American missions.
- ▶ Sister Susan Wood participated in the Oct. 31, 2016 launch of the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation in Lund, Sweden, attended by Pope Francis and leaders of world religions. Sister Susan was a guest speaker at several other programs to commemorate the anniversary and to discuss ecumenical themes. In addition, she spoke at the October 2018 international symposium on Pope Francis at Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology, Franklin, Wis.
- ▶ Sisters and Associates maintained strong ties and involvement with the Charity Federation including participation in meetings of leadership and the Company of Charity Formation Personnel. In September 2018, Marillac Center hosted the Charity Federation grassroots retreat in Leavenworth.



Lutheran-Catholic dialogue is a frequent topic of presentations by Sister Susan Wood, shown here speaking at Church of the Holy Cross, Overland Park, Kan., in November 2017.



This poster proclaims the theme of the International Union of Superiors General Council of Delegates meeting in November 2107.



Under the direction of Andrea Sladtky, music teacher, Xavier Catholic School students perform songs with Earth themes for guests at Earth Fest on the Mother House campus in April 2018.

Caring for God's people and Earth

- ▶ Sisters and SCL Associates advocated on several timely issues: the federal budget and tax reform; the status of the Dreamers; temporary protected status of refugees; migrant children; gun violence; the travel ban ruling; and the ceiling for the number of refugees allowed in the country.
- ▶ The SCL Community hosted a total eclipse event on Aug. 21, 2017, welcoming guests to the campus for the “watch party.” While intermittent rain and cloudy skies hampered the eclipse experience, the gathering celebrated creation.
- ▶ Solar panels over the south Mother House parking lot have been generating power for heating and cooling of the Ross Hall skilled nursing facility since late 2016 when the system went live.
- ▶ The SCL Care of Creation Committee organized a well-attended event in conjunction with Earth Day, April 22, 2018. Located in the front drive area of the Mother House, Earth Fest attracted approximately 200 guests who visited earth-friendly exhibits, participated in activities and enjoyed refreshments.



Sisters and employees gather on Nov. 11, 2016 to dedicate the solar panels over the south parking lot on the Mother House campus.

ABOUT THE SCL COMMUNITY

Number of SCLs: 201

Number of SCL Associates: 222

Committees

- ▶ Care of Creation Committee
- ▶ Governance Committee
- ▶ Initial Formation Team – United States
- ▶ Initial Formation Team – Peru
- ▶ Ongoing Formation Committee
- ▶ SCL Associate Advisory Board
- ▶ Social Justice Committee
- ▶ Vocation Network

Sponsored ministries

- ▶ Centro San Vicente de Paul (health, wellness and spirituality center, Piura, Peru)
- ▶ Cristo Rey Kansas City High School (Kansas City, Mo.)
- ▶ University of Saint Mary (Leavenworth and Overland Park, Kan.)

Related ministries

- ▶ Marillac Center (retreat and spirituality center, Leavenworth)
- ▶ Leaven Ministries (sponsor of SCL Health)



All eyes to the sky – including those of Sister Peg Johnson – during the total eclipse event hosted on the Mother House campus.



Left to right, Sisters Vicki Lichtenauer (SCL), Nancy Gerth (Sister of Charity of Nazareth) and Noreen Walter (SCL) view the Moments of Grace display of all SCL Mothers Superior/Mothers General/Community Directors during the 160th anniversary celebration.

Sustaining our charism

- ▶ Sisters and SCL Associates joined with people around the world in observance of the 400th anniversary of the Vincentian charism throughout 2017. Sisters Margaret Finch and Peg Johnson participated in the Vincentian spirituality program in Paris. Masses and receptions occurred in local communities around the Sept. 27 feast of St. Vincent de Paul. Six SCLs were among the 9,500 registrants who attended the Oct. 12-15 Vincentian Symposium in Rome.
- ▶ The SCL Community observed its 160th anniversary in 2018 with a daylong observance at the SCL Mother House. See pages 20 and 21.



Three cheers sound for the successful food drive for Catholic Charities coordinated by the SCL Mission Team. Clockwise from top, Catholic Charities representative with the SCL team of Mike Williams, Tom Waller, Kim Calhoun, Kena Ellington, Sister Rosalie Curtin and Mike Vornholt.



As part of the worldwide observance of the 400th anniversary of the Vincentian charism, young adults carry the statue of the 17th century saint through the streets of Piura, Peru.

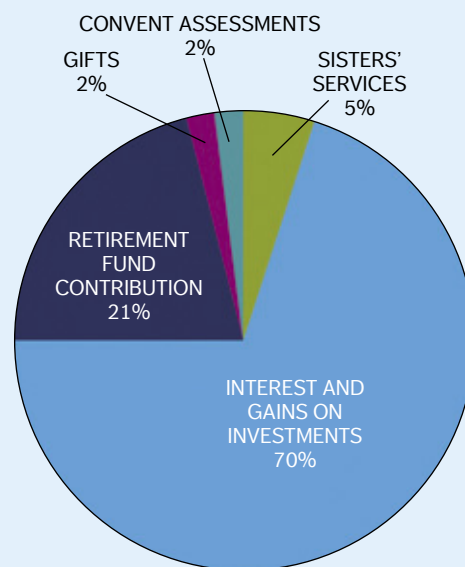
- ▶ The University of Saint Mary had a lead role in development of the Vincentian formation program for staff and administrators of colleges/universities sponsored by member congregations of the Charity Federation. The program launched in September 2017 and is beginning a second cohort.
- ▶ The SCLs marked the transfer of leadership to a new Community Council on Sunday, July 17, 2016. Sister Constance Phelps, Community Director, and Councilors Sisters Eileen Haynes, Amy Willcott and Phyllis Stowell assumed responsibilities three days later.
- ▶ Hermanas in Peru elected Hermana Clorinda Timaná Martinez as Director of Latin American Missions, and Hermanas Susana Córdova Castillo and Esther Vilela Gutierrez as Assistants in February 2017.
- ▶ Sixty-four Associates, three Candidates and 15 Sisters gathered July 15 to Oct. 28, 2017 at different locations to reflect upon the gifts of the SCL Community and to consider the SCL Associate mission statement invitation to “build community.” Meetings occurred in Billings and Butte, Mont.; Denver and Grand Junction, Colo.; and Leavenworth.
- ▶ The Employee Mission Team remained active sponsoring projects and activities in support of the SCL mission. The team represents employees of the Mother House, Ross Hall, Cantwell Hall Offices and Marillac Center.
- ▶ Exhibits in Butte, Mont., and Santa Monica, Calif., in 2017 and 2018 recognized contributions of the SCL Community to the healthcare ministry.

SCL Stewardship Report

June 1, 2016 – May 31, 2018

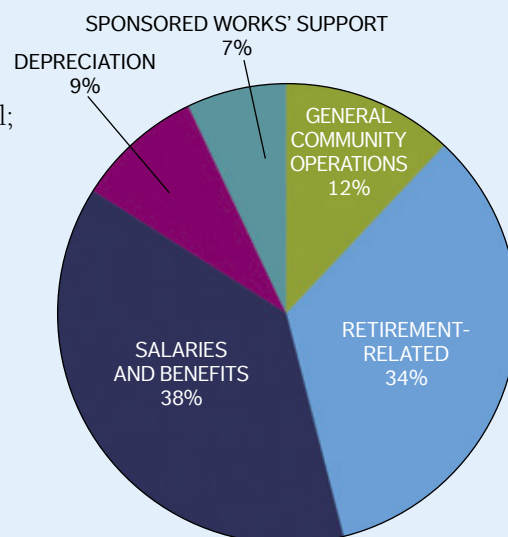
Sources of Income 2016-2018

- **Sisters' services** – Includes incomes of Sisters.
- **Interest and gains on investments** – Realized and unrealized investment activity.
- **Retirement fund contribution** – Contribution from the retirement fund to reimburse for expenses related to SCLs who are retired.
- **Gifts** – Miscellaneous donations to SCLs.
- **Convent assessments** – For cars and Health Fund.



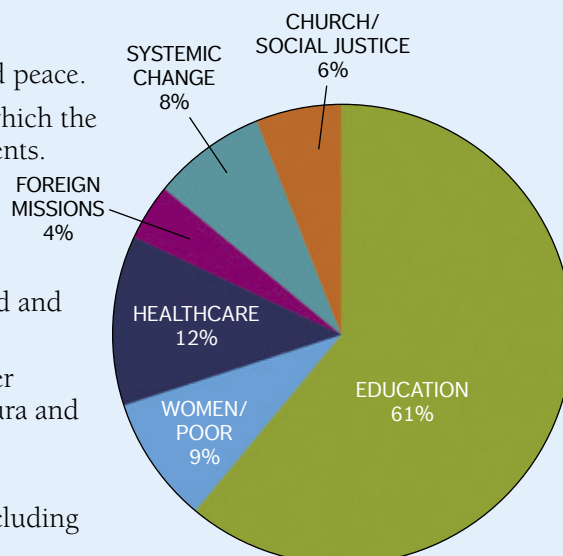
Categories of Expenses 2016-2018

- **General Community operations** – Support of the infrastructure to operate the Mother House, Ross Hall, Marillac Center and Cantwell Hall; the Charity Fund; major medical expenses; and all other expenses not designated on the chart.
- **Retirement-related** – Housing, healthcare and all living expenses for retired SCLs at the Mother House, Ross Hall and other locations.
- **Salaries and benefits** – Salaries and benefits of employees who work at the Mother House, Ross Hall, Marillac Center and Cantwell Hall.
- **Depreciation** – A non-cash expense which reduces the value of an asset due to wear and tear, age, etc.
- **Sponsored works' support** – Major SCL gifts to sponsored ministries.



Charitable Contributions 2016-2018

- **Church/social justice** – SCL donations directed toward justice and peace.
- **Education** – Donations to schools where SCLs teach and/or with which the religious Community has been associated, or scholarships for students.
- **Women/poor** – Contributions to agencies and organizations that work to improve the well-being of women, the poor and persons who are oppressed.
- **Healthcare** – Contributions to SCL Health clinics for the uninsured and to SCL Mission Funds at SCL Health hospitals.
- **Foreign missions** – Contributions to religious communities in other countries and to our own St. Vincent de Paul Pastoral Center in Piura and other programs in Peru.
- **Systemic change** – Contributions to agencies that engage in the identification of the root causes of poverty and create strategies, including advocacy, to change those structures that keep people in poverty.



Vocation ministry:

it's all about relationships

While today's college-aged students may not have grown up knowing women religious, in her role as SCL vocation director, Sister Vicki Lichtenauer is committed to introducing them to Sisters as real people with a passion for service.



A student stops by to visit with Sister Vicki during Cookies with the Catholics at Loyola University, New Orleans.



During a recent retreat sponsored by Loyola University campus ministry, these three students were part of the cooking team that made mighty sandwiches for lunch.

In New Orleans where she currently serves at the House of Charity, Sister Vicki does outreach at Loyola University, a Jesuit college. In collaboration with campus ministry, Sister Vicki is on the campus weekly. She devotes time to one-on-one spiritual companionship with students; Busy Student Retreats; and collaboration with student leaders.

On Thursdays, in the Loyola student union, campus ministry hosts "Cookies with the Catholics." Student clubs and organizations can claim a table from 12:30 to 2 p.m. and share cookies, answer questions,

and meet and greet students. Sister Vicki participates weekly.

At Sister Vicki's invitation, campus ministry staff have used space at the House of Charity for meetings and gatherings. This included a senior retreat conducted by three Loyola alumni and another retreat focused on social justice. In addition, campus ministry helps publicize events that the House of Charity is hosting or promoting.

Sister Vicki joined the Loyola campus ministry team for the Fall Awakening retreat that involved over 120 students and staff. The

event allowed student leaders to share stories of their faith journeys and to build community with both new and returning students. Sister Vicki provided a sisterly presence during the retreat, meeting with some students and staff for one-on-one chats; helping behind the scenes with food, set up and take down; and attending the talks.

With the belief that vocation ministry in its best form is steeped in building relationships, Sister Vicki is on a continuing mission to explore and discover venues and opportunities to encounter young adults.



Heart of the Matter

Flexibility, sense of humor key to being ‘servant of the servants’

Whether planning monthly happy hours, scheduling presentations, or coordinating a Sister’s funeral arrangements, Sister Lucy Walter thinks of her role as “servant of the servants,” a description used by St. Vincent de Paul.

Sister Lucy has served as coordinator of the Mother House since 1999, with responsibilities added for Ross Hall in 2001. From existing archival records, Sister Lucy has the longest tenure of any SCL in this position.

Approaching 20 years in this important role, she has learned to value and practice flexibility as a virtue. She admits not knowing what she was getting into when she accepted the position. To this day, Sister Lucy never knows what a phone call or email will require of her time and attention.

What she does know is that it’s her role to make sure the Sisters’ varied needs are met. “I love seeing the Sisters comfortable and happy in their retirement,” she says. “I’m here to help coordinate all that this entails by taking time to listen, to smile and to be part of their lives.”

With her characteristic positive outlook and good humor, she appears to take things in stride. She’s a great party planner, a go-to person and a seasoned problem-solver.

A day in the life of

Sister Lucy appreciates that there are no two days alike in her ministry with the SCLs who live at the Mother House and Ross Hall. There are the difficult times of seeing Sisters begin to transition to their final days and helping family members say their goodbyes. Sister Lucy has coordinated burials of 212 SCLs since 1999. She’s missed only one or two of these funerals, but still had a part in the planning. Early on, she was a one-person operation with duties to contact the family, develop the vigil service, make punch for the reception. “It’s so much easier to have a team doing this now,” she adds.

On the lighter side, Sister Lucy introduced the monthly happy hour to provide an opportunity for Mother House and Ross Hall

SCLs to mingle. She schedules presentations about sponsored ministries. She has been involved in major renovations of the Mother House and Ross Hall, construction of the new skilled nursing center and the different relocations those initiatives required Sisters to make. She also assisted with the health and wellness study to identify opportunities for improved services. In addition, she responds to emails for Sisters unable to do so and tries to visit hospitalized Sisters and await recoveries of those having surgery.

“I do my best to be present with the Sisters,” she adds.

A lifetime of spirit-filled service

Shocked when she discovered she was a “seven” or “enthusiast” on the Enneagram (a system to identify personality types), the description fits Sister Lucy to a T. Traits of sevens include being extroverted, optimistic, versatile, spontaneous, playful, high-spirited and practical.

This has been the case throughout her life and ministry. Sister Lucy grew up across the street from Visitation Grade School, Los Angeles, where SCLs taught. She attended the University of Saint Mary, Leavenworth, for two years. When it came time to declare her major, she had no idea about this, so she applied to enter the SCL Community. She bonded well with other postulants in her class; they sang and prayed together and also enjoyed fun times together.

Sister Lucy taught first grade as her first ministry and began spending



What’s not to love about a dressed up pink flamingo from Sister Lucy’s party warehouse.

summers at a day camp of the Child Study Center associated with Saint John's Health Center, Santa Monica, Calif. This evolved into a full-time position working with kids with emotional disturbances, physical handicaps and other challenges. She devoted 13 years to programs for preschoolers, young adults and teenagers with autism.

Her next adventure involved Sister Lucy with the start-up of L'Arche Heartland in Overland Park, Kan., where she lived in community with people with disabilities. Over her seven years with this program, she felt privileged to attend retreats given by Jean Vanier, founder of L'Arche, and Henri Nouwen, priest and author who ministered at a L'Arche community in Canada. Sister Lucy has remained connected to L'Arche Heartland over the past 30 years as part of the faith and sharing team that facilitates an annual retreat for persons with disabilities and their families held at the University of Saint Mary.

Following a sabbatical that included a range of different experiences, Sister Lucy became manager of the kitchen for Community Living Opportunities in Lawrence, Kan. For three years, she coordinated daily preparation of meals for 100 persons with disabilities. Clients of the program were on her team, and Sister Lucy found creative ways to keep them engaged. She received an award for conserving expenses in food service; started an exercise program for the clients; and spruced up the large warehouse area dining room with decorations.

Gifted and blessed

Invited to be part of the discernment for the Mother House coordinator position, Sister Lucy



Sister Lucy strives to create a welcoming environment at the Mother House for Sisters, family members, visitors and staff.

had one request: that she not live where she worked to ensure some personal time and space. While adjustment to this change initially proved difficult for some Sisters, Sister Lucy's outgoing nature, positive attitude, great spirit and helpfulness eased the transition.

Next to her office, she has a small, well-organized room filled with seasonal decorations. Sister Lucy draws upon this frequently to provide a festive environment for observances and parties. She's creative, and she likes to celebrate.

Most important for Sister Lucy is that she feels privileged to be with all the Sisters she serves. "I think we're a very special group of gifted women," she says of the SCL Community. "And we are blessed with lay employees who help us carry on the charism."

The 12 commandments according to Sister Lucy

- ▶ Never take yourself too seriously.
- ▶ Try to be positive and open.
- ▶ Try to love better each day.
- ▶ Try to listen.
- ▶ Don't worry if you cannot always make things better or fix things that are broken.
- ▶ Take one day at a time.
- ▶ Bring out the gifts in others.
- ▶ Try to find the humor in things.
- ▶ Don't try to change anyone; the only one you can change is yourself.
- ▶ Try to make things nice and comfortable.
- ▶ Let people be themselves.
- ▶ Let live.



When she first began her role as coordinator of the Mother House, Sisters gave Sister Lucy these banners listing winning traits for the position.

From superior to coordinator: evolving roles for changing times



Sister Jane Jackson (left) preceded Sister Lucy Walter in the role of Mother House coordinator. They share a laugh at a Hawaiian-themed happy hour at the Mother House.

As the pioneer Community of the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth (SCLs) expanded its ministries and opened convents, leadership most often appointed a Sister superior for each new location. This SCL had oversight responsibility for the physical, spiritual and emotional well-being of the Sisters; the house in which they lived; and/or the operation of the particular ministry.

In the early years, with the concentration of Sisters living at the Mother House, the Mother Superior of the entire SCL Community also served as local superior of that location. In 1922, with final approval of the SCL Constitution, leadership appointed a local superior of the Mother House. Sister Rose Mary Berry was first to hold this position. (*We Came North*, Sister Julia Gilmore)

In subsequent years, the title of this role changed from superior to local coordinator at the Mother House where the largest number of Sisters continued to reside as they went out to their assignments in the area. There were few lay employees, and designated Sisters worked in food service, housekeeping, human resources and other areas.

With the development of the Ross Hall nursing facility, another division of labor occurred with a local superior/coordinator/administrator appointed for that group of Sisters. Additional further delegation of responsibilities led to the naming of a Mother House administrator. This Sister was responsible for support departments where increasing numbers of lay employees worked (e.g., food service, housekeeping, grounds, maintenance, etc.).

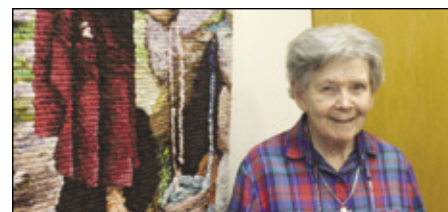
Over the years, there appears to have been some blending of the titles and responsibilities. In addition, the Mother House population has shifted to include a larger percentage of Sisters who continue to serve, but who are retired from their full-time ministries.

From known records, Sister Lucy Walter has the distinction of the longest tenure as coordinator, serving both the Mother House and Ross Hall Sisters. Working with her are Sherry Wickenhauser, assistant coordinator, and Sister Carolyn Gloege, pastoral associate. Sister Margaret Finch is Mother House administrator, and Beverly Armstrong, Ross Hall administrator.

From PAST LOCAL

Among their past ministries, four living SCLs served in the role of local coordinator of the Mother House. The former local coordinators consider getting to know the Sisters the greatest reward of their experiences. They also characterize the times when they held this position as very different from today.

Sister Regina Deitchman



As a young Sister who had never been a superior, Sister Regina was local coordinator during perhaps one of the most turbulent times in the Community's history. From 1966 to 1969, she attempted to balance life for Sisters living at the Mother House amidst the extensive changes occurring within the post Vatican II Church and in religious life.

There were changes in prayer practices and in the habits worn by the Sisters. For the first time, Sisters received money through a budgeting process, whereas previously they requested funds for a specific need and returned unused amounts.

Sister Regina recalls that the older Sisters came to her office and asked, "Why are we doing this?" At the same time, the younger members came

challenges to fun

COORDINATORS RECALL SERVING MOTHER HOUSE SCLS

with the question, “Why aren’t we doing this?”

There were few lay employees. Sisters filled most of the roles, including housekeeping. Nazareth Hall served as the infirmary and was the precursor to today’s Ross Hall. The Mother House was full of Sisters at different stages of religious life and formation caught up in the throes of change that was exciting for some and challenging for many.

Sister Jean Lind



As she reflects on her six years as local coordinator, Sister Jean says the role was about the people. She did whatever was needed. This included making arrangements for visitors and orienting them to the campus; arranging funerals with family members and funeral homes; planning feast day observances and parties; and coordinating moves during renovations. With a nursing background, Sister Jean took extra care to connect Sisters with mental health concerns to specialized professional help. She also developed emergency plans for disasters such as fires and tornadoes.

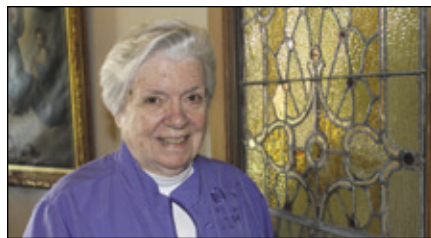
“I always tried to make a place that felt like home where Sisters could come together in community,” she says.

She, too, remembers that things were very different from 1989 to

1995 when she held the coordinator position. Of the more than 90 Sisters in the Mother House, about half were active in Mother House ministries, from housekeeping to human resources. Others served in Leavenworth or the surrounding area. Sisters didn’t live in houses in town. Computers weren’t commonplace.

“It was really a wonderful experience to get to know all the Sisters,” she sums up. She adds that she gave it her all, but knew when it was time for a fresh approach and new ideas.

Sister Nancy Bauman



While serving as director of novices, Sister Nancy was Mother House coordinator for a nine-month interim period. She credits Sister Jean, her predecessor, with leaving well-organized notes and files for planning events and activities.

Sister Nancy says that getting to know the Mother House Sisters on a more personal level enriched her life. She marvels at ways the Sisters looked out for one another and created a sense of belonging for other SCLs returning home. They also rallied to meet needs during crises and demonstrated generosity of their time, effort and concern. She says this spirit continues today.

She remembers a Saturday that promised to be a wonderful day

with nothing planned, and then the telephone rang. Sister Nancy spent the rest of the day making travel arrangements for a Sister to attend her brother’s funeral. Fun activities like birthday parties and line dancing lessons balanced the schedule.

Sister Jane Jackson



The greatest challenge Sister Jane recalls from her time as Mother House coordinator was keeping all the jobs filled. Sisters did most of the work, and when they became ill or took other assignments, it fell to Sister Jane to find replacements.

She saw her role as one of serving the Sisters. “They were great people whom I really admired,” she says, “and I got to know them in a different way.”

She had a very supportive leadership Council that provided good and clear direction and assisted with activities. She visited Sisters who were sick; took others to the hospital; met with Mother House nurses about Sisters with chronic illnesses; and planned parties with a talented group of women.

“I’m a great believer in community,” she says. “What I liked most in my role as coordinator was living and working with these wonderful women, sharing their lives and prayers. Each day was different, and it was kind of fun.”



Re-Markings

Journey to citizenship culminates for Sister María

On Aug. 17, Sister María de los Milagros Orozco Olaya took the oath of citizenship with 90 other applicants during the naturalization ceremony at the Robert J. Dole U.S. Courthouse in Kansas City, Kan.

Sister María was one of three Peruvians and – to her knowledge – the only woman religious in the group.



Following the naturalization ceremony, new citizen Sister María de los Milagros Orozco Olaya (with the flag) poses with her community of friends. Front row, Hermana Julia Huiman Ipanaque, Sisters María, Vickie Perkins, Helen Therese Mack; back row, Sisters Mary Lex Smith, Charlotte White, Mary Rita Winter, Judith Jackson, Donna Jean Henson, Mary Jo Downey, Eileen Haynes, Linda Roth and SCL Associates Kitty and Len Bronec.

Sister María may have had the largest contingent of supporters in the audience as several Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth (SCLs) and SCL Associates gathered to celebrate this milestone in her life. Sister has been an SCL for 32 years. She joined the Community in her native Talara, Peru, as a Hermana de la Caridad (Spanish for Sisters of Charity).

Her journey

Sister María's path to U.S. citizenship dates to 1992 when she first came to the Midwest as an observer at an official meeting of the SCL Community. She returned in 1996 when U.S. Sisters hosted the Peruvian Hermanas to

familiarize them with ministries in this country. During these early trips, Sister María had no plans to remain in the U.S. In 2002, she came to study English at Donnelly College, Kansas City, Kan. Again, she returned to Peru. Sister eventually requested the opportunity to learn more about the roots of the Community in the Midwest.

In 2004, Sister María traveled to Kansas for 12 months that expanded into 14 years. She volunteered at All Saints Parish, Kansas City, Kan., where she met and interacted with teachers at the school. Sister María found her passion in being able to communicate in Spanish with the people and to listen to them and understand their needs.

The next part of her journey involved parish ministry at St. John the Evangelist Parish, also in Kansas City, Kan., with responsibilities for RCIA and formation of parents in family catechesis. In 2007, she added Holy Cross Parish, Overland Park, Kan., to her ministries. Then, Sister María joined the Archdiocesan Hispanic Ministry Office in adult formation. For several years, she served all three of these ministries. Gradually, she left parish ministry and became more active in the archdiocesan office. In 2014, she began working full-time as general coordinator of evangelization for the Hispanic Ministry Office.

When Sister María first came to the U.S., she arrived with a tourist visa. Later, she applied for and received a visa for a religious worker. She began studying for citizenship with the assistance of other SCLs who quizzed her on questions and provided learning tools. Time passed, and schedules intervened.

Meaningful experience

In 2017, Sister María joined a Catholic Charities immigration study group and obtained permission from SCL leaders to proceed with meeting the requirements to become a citizen. Things progressed quickly in 2018. Sister completed the paperwork, underwent fingerprinting and took the citizenship test. One question challenged her: the willingness to bear arms to defend the United States. Sister María's response was that she could defend the U.S. in many ways, but not with weapons. "I am an SCL, and I want to be faithful to my charism to work for justice and charity, but not to use arms to do this," she says. Bolstered by the prayers and support of the SCL Community, Sister María passed the citizenship exam on June 4.

"Being an American citizen means a lot to me," she says. "It gives me the opportunity to vote in elections, to keep working with my people in these difficult times,



One guest of honor greets the other during the reception at the Mother House that followed Sister María's naturalization ceremony.

and to accompany them as they face challenges."

In her current ministry, Sister helps Spanish-speaking people prepare for the sacraments and look for jobs, and accompanies them to immigration offices or detention centers. She's available to listen whatever the problem may be. "I feel that they trust me now even more because I was an immigrant and became a citizen," she adds.

"I want to invite those who are still afraid to approach those who are different – whether in language or culture – to take steps to go forward hand-in-hand with God as people who walk in faith," she encourages. "We want to foster a world of love and equality to build the kingdom of God where we can sit at the table with those representing the different faces of God – for me, this is the kingdom of God."

Ministry maximized appeal of nature with spirituality

With the beauty of the Great Smoky Mountains a strong calling card, Sister Frances Marie Grady complemented this by offering a variety of spirituality programs and fostering a welcoming environment during her seven years as director of the Living Waters Catholic Reflection Center, Maggie Valley, N.C.

Her goal was to introduce people to the beauty of the location. She expanded upon the center's tradition of nature retreats that explored themes of creation, earth, water, fire and air. She engaged local residents such as a Cherokee storyteller and the "wolf man" to be part of the retreat team.

As director, Sister Frances Marie coordinated all programs and made arrangements for persons on sabbaticals. She did spiritual direction. In fact, she did it all: from financial management to maintenance, from registration to hosting. She left the full-time position this summer, but remains on staff as a spiritual director, the role she first held when she joined the Living Waters staff in 2003. She had known the facility since the 1980s when she made a retreat there. Sister Frances Marie returned frequently through the years to facilitate nature retreats before becoming a staff member.

Her ministry encompassed a commitment to women's spirituality and care of the Earth. She created space and opportunities for people to experience nature in a beautiful setting while deepening their faith and spirituality. She was also a listener, a gift that proved important during a recent crisis in the local Church. Sister walked with people during this difficult time and supported the healing process. At the time, she felt she was where she needed to be.

Happy to be away from the stress of administration, Sister Frances Marie hopes to enjoy the mountains more and return to the artistry of her painting with watercolors. She has facilitated art retreats annually including one titled "Paint Your Prayers." She senses that her own painting is taking on a more spiritual, Biblical and naturalistic approach.

"I don't know what the next leg of my journey is going to be like," she sums up. "I plan to focus on the people I've met and the friends I've made, and find inspiration from these relationships and encounters."



The surrounding environment of Maggie Valley, N.C., provides a great setting for nature retreats given by Sister Frances Marie (third from right).



Father Jim Cahill, retired diocesan priest, with Sister Frances Marie at the reception in honor of her years of service as director of Living Waters Catholic Reflection Center.



Sister Frances Marie at Mingus Mill with Rob Gudger, the miller. Rob is also the "wolf man" who brought his wolves to a session during Sister Frances Marie's creation retreats.

Process engages SCLs in direction setting

Using contemplative dialogue and engaging in deep conversations, Sisters participating in the July 30-31 Leaven Assembly began visioning the future in support of “affirming their evolving charism” – the meeting’s theme.

Sister Nancy Schreck, OSF, was featured speaker for the July 30-31 Leaven Assembly at the SCL Mother House.



Sister Nancy encouraged SCLs in attendance to:

- ▶ Acquire the fiery passion that characterized the pioneer Sisters.
- ▶ Stop doing what is easy and focus on what is necessary.
- ▶ Bring forth those who want a future to create new expressions.
- ▶ Leave the comfort zones of the familiar.
- ▶ Let go of what no longer assists in mission.
- ▶ Identify neglected conversations.
- ▶ Move from desire to action.

In her presentation titled “All the Light We Need,” Sister Nancy Schreck, OSF, discussed life cycles of a religious community. She said that transformative times, such as the present, call for contemplation about the possibilities that lie ahead.

“Religious life is evolving, as it always has,” she said. She also described religious life as a mystical-prophetic life form and urged SCLs to hold to a vision rooted in God’s promise and abiding hope. “Habits of a vigorous mind are formed in contending with difficulties,” she noted.

Presentations by SCL Community Officers also raised key questions for discussion by SCLs at the Leaven Assembly. Sister Constance Phelps, Community Director, reviewed the circular model of governance structured around accountability and responsibility that is member to member, member to leadership, and leadership to members. “With mission always at the center of our efforts, our evolving charism supports this mission,” she said. Other focus was on contemplation in action, prophetic witness, collaboration, community, vocations and living the paschal mystery.

Small group discussion interspersed throughout the presentations provided time for contemplative dialogue and surfaced responses to concepts that emerged over the two days.



Umbrella décor at the Leaven Assembly symbolized the mission (the canopy); charism (the handle); and topics brought forward from the Leaven Groups (raindrops).



At the Leaven Assembly, SCL Officers raised points for continuing discussion. Left to right, Sisters Phyllis Stowell, Jean Anne Panisko, Constance Phelps, Eileen Haynes and Amy Willcott.



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.

Sister Therese Bangert recognized for advocacy

Sister Therese Bangert (center) received the Person of the Year Award presented by Christie Appelhanz (left) and Katrina McGivern (right), members of Community Action's Board of Directors.



Sister Therese Bangert received Community Action, Inc.'s Person of the Year Award on Thursday, Oct. 11 at the organization's annual meeting in Topeka, Kan.

Community Action acknowledged Sister Therese as an outstanding promoter of the mission to fight poverty and achieve greater economic and social inclusion for all. In particular, the agency recognized her unwavering, unstoppable advocacy for the Earned Income Tax Credit as unparalleled and as bringing great attention and understanding of complicated issues to a broad group of people.

Charity Federation plans Assembly of the Whole



The Sisters of Charity Federation will hold its first **Assembly of the Whole** from June 13 to 16, 2019, in Chicago, Ill. The invitation has gone out to sisters and associates of the 13 member congregations that trace their roots to St. Vincent de Paul, St. Louise de Marillac and St. Elizabeth Ann Seton. Theme for the gathering will be "Weaving Together With Unstoppable Charity." This is the first time all members of the religious congregations and their associates have been invited to a combined meeting.

Launch of new websites

Visit www.scls.org for the new look of the SCL website. SCL Communications launched the updated design in August 2018. At the same time, Marillac Center's website also adopted a similar, new look at www.marillaccenter.org.

The 2017 communications audit led to development of the new design. Another outcome of the audit was implementation of a new communication tool for the Mother House and Ross Hall. "Information Station" is the name of the message board broadcast daily on televisions in rooms of Sisters at the Mother House and Ross Hall. Kudos to Sister Mary Pat Lenahan who named the daily broadcast.



Leavenworth Interfaith Community of Hope receives statewide recognition

The **Leavenworth Interfaith Community of Hope** received The Ad Astra Award for Innovative Housing from Kansas Housing Resources Corporation on Sept. 12 during its annual conference in Topeka. The awards presented at the Kansas Housing Conference recognize outstanding housing advocates whose contributions make a positive impact on communities in the state.

“Receiving this award pays tremendous tribute to the many individuals, churches, agencies and businesses with whom we collaborate,” says Sister Vickie Perkins, executive director of Leavenworth Interfaith Community of Hope. “From the very beginning, we have relied on the goodwill and generosity of countless persons to serve those with a variety of needs. Our model has worked because of the continued outpouring of community support.”



Sister Vickie Perkins (center), executive director of the Leavenworth Interfaith Community of Hope, accepts the Ad Astra Award from Topeka mayor Michelle De La Isla and Kansas Housing Resources Corporation executive director Dennis Mesa. (Photo by Fountain City Studios, Bucyrus, Kan.)

GOLDEN JUBILIAR I A N S

Sister Margaret Quirk (center) and **Sister Joy Duff** renewed their vows during the Mass of Thanksgiving on Sunday, July 29, to mark their Golden Jubilees as Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth. Father Dennis Schaab, CPPS (left), was celebrant of the Mass in Annunciation Chapel at the Mother House.



Graced moments abound during 160th Jubilee observance

Sisters and SCL Associates gathered on Aug. 1 for a day of prayer, celebration and remembrance in commemoration of the 160th anniversary of the founding of the SCL Community. While the actual anniversary date was Nov. 11, the August observance coincided with meetings of Leaven Assembly and the SCL Associates in Leavenworth.



Before Morning Prayer to open the 160th anniversary observance, Sister Constance Phelps (left), SCL Community Director, confers with Sister Nancy Gerth, representing the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth at the celebration.



At the conclusion of the anniversary Mass, the three living Community Directors bless a Kentucky coffeetree, symbolic of the roots of the SCL Community in the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth, Ky. Left to right, Sisters Constance Phelps, Sue Miller and Maureen Hall.



Sister Melissa Camardo gives the reflection during the 160th anniversary Mass in Annunciation Chapel.



With music an important dimension of SCL history, this group fills Annunciation Chapel with joyful sound to celebrate the 160th anniversary. From left, Sisters Jean Martin Dawson, Eileen Marie Johnson (partially hidden), Mary Barbara Wieseler, Gloria Solomon, Sheila Taylor, Anne Callahan and Peg Johnson; at the lectern, Sister Anita Sullivan; in the background, Sister Kevin Marie Flynn, sacristan.

Sister Kevin Marie Flynn lights a candle before this restored statue of the Blessed Virgin. In 1944, students at St. Mary's Academy, Leavenworth, gifted the Sisters and school with the statue. The gift commemorated the apparition of the Blessed Virgin following the 1882 cyclone that struck the school tower and resulted in the deaths of four students. The statue was recently restored.



Vocalists Katherine Mackenzie, Jasmine Lowe, Sister Irene Skeehan and Katie Kaminski take their cue from John Winkels for a memorable performance to cap the 160th anniversary observance. All are associated with the music and liturgy program at Holy Family Parish, Kansas City, Mo.



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



Answering the call to charity as social worker, peace advocate



Based on her life, ministries and experiences, Sister Frances Russell could write the sequel to *Oh, the Places You'll Go!*, the last of Dr. Seuss' books published during his lifetime. Sister Frances' book could be titled *Oh, the Stories You'll Tell!*; or *the Causes You'll Serve!*; or *the People You'll Encounter!*

Stories recount life experiences

There was Patty, the 18-year-old whom Sister Frances met during her social work practicum with public welfare in St. Louis. An emergency call reported that the young woman was trying to sell her baby in front of a bar. Sister Frances found Patty in a house of prostitution where the madam thought the nun in full habit came to shut down her business. Patty was on Sister's caseload for two years.

There was Dick Cheney, then congressman from Wyoming and later U.S. secretary of defense and vice president, whom Sister Frances debated in a public forum on the issue of missile build-up. In the early 1980s, Sister lived in Cheyenne where she worked with Cuban refugees. She was instrumental in the development of a Catholic Worker house that sheltered women and children, and that engaged her intensely in advocacy for peace.

There was the fact that her many good deeds and her work for peace and against nuclear weapons earned Sister Frances the national Social Worker of

the Year Award in 1983. This honor went to the same Sister Frances who in the mid-1960s had asked, "What is social work?" when Mother Leo Frances Ryan invited her to pursue studies in this field.

There was Sister Frances' willingness to go to Cambodia to serve persons disenfranchised by the Vietnam War. As it ended up, she worked with Cambodian refugees in Denver. When asked to teach and develop a social work department at Saint Mary College, she thought, "I can do that." Sister was an instructor there for four years.

A lifetime of working for people, peace

Sister Frances is a social worker at heart and by nature. She entered the SCL Community in August 1949, hoping to work with orphans. After 14 years in elementary school classrooms, she earned her master's degree in social work and received her desired mission assignment at St. Vincent Home, Topeka, Kan. Named superior and administrator of the orphanage, Sister Frances recalls that she learned quickly how to be a "boss." She enlisted professionals from Menninger Clinic to work with the youth and hired overnight caregivers so the Sisters could live in community in a convent nearby and not be on duty in the orphanage 24/7. She retains a strong bond with the group of SCLs (nicknamed "The Clump") with whom she served the children and teens who

came from painful life situations.

From 1967 to 1996, Sister's social work ministry was challenging and full. Her file in the SCL archives is thick with articles describing her peace ministry in Wyoming. She was a coalition-builder and an outspoken advocate for peace. In other mission assignments, she did counseling in parishes and in rural communities during the farm crisis. She also served in hospice ministry.

Changing times

She reflects on being an SCL during very interesting times. Sister Frances experienced the traditional role of an educator and life in convents. She was also part of the new era in the Church and religious life ushered in by the Second Vatican Council. "We were all opening doors, and we didn't know where they led," she says. "But we were taking up the call of St. Vincent de Paul and responding to needs through different ministries."

Sister Frances acknowledges that her understanding of the call to charity changed significantly over the years. She credits St. Vincent de Paul and Sister Marie de Paul Combo with helping her learn the SCL charism. She renews her spirit annually by re-reading Sister Mary Buckner's *History of the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth, Kansas* (published in 1898).

"I always think about how the pioneer Sisters did what they did," Sister Frances comments. "As we try to figure out next steps for our SCL Community, it's important to review that history and understand its development over the years."

As for herself, Sister Frances is learning to accept that she can't be as active as she once was. That doesn't keep her from being involved in social justice concerns and living the Vincentian charism. That's the heart and soul of who she is as a Sister of Charity of Leavenworth.

Don't worry about numbers

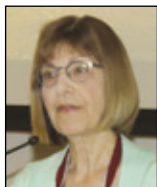
speaker tells Associates



Sisters and SCL Associates exchange ideas during the July 2018 gatherings in Leavenworth. Left to right, Sister Rejane Cytacki and SCL Associates Sandy Simmons and Brad Grabs.

Over two days of meetings in late July, SCL Associates listened, learned and discerned who they are called to be today and into the future given the transformation occurring in religious communities and religious life.

Jeanne Connelly, director of charism and mission with the Wheaton Franciscans, and president of the North American Conference of Associates and Religious (NACAR), was the presenter and facilitator. She set the stage by observing that culture changes, times change and the call to meet needs changes. She noted that there is not a hierarchy of holiness, and that each person is called to transform the world.



Jeanne Connelly

The presenter, a Covenant Companion (associate) with the Wheaton Franciscans for more than 23 years, defined associates as women and men who choose to make a public and formal commitment

to embody the charism they share in common with a religious congregation. This occurs within an individual's primary life vocation for the sake of God's creation. "Associates are called to co-create with the vowed community and others for the sake of all of God's creation," she elaborated. "It is in and through community that Gospel values flourish and our charism is mysteriously fruitful."

A 'flourishing community'

Jeanne explained charism as the spirit energy that brings life to the prayer and work done as individuals and as a community. "It's always a gift from God and always given for the sake of the world," she added.

Though many associate communities have concerns about sustainability, Jeanne encouraged SCL Associates to work toward becoming a "flourishing community" where gifts and talents are shared in the name of the charism and mission. "To flourish requires that we think about, dream about, talk about what is being created now as it impacts what we desire to create for the future. This is a time for servant leadership and conscious followership that have the same purpose of serving others."

"Don't worry about numbers," she cautioned, "but be about why we exist."

On day two of the meetings, SCL Associates worked in small groups to brainstorm about ways to move toward a flourishing community.

Steps identified by Jeanne to become a flourishing community

- ▶ Continued growth in self-awareness and recognition of gifts and blind spots.
- ▶ Courage, accountability, understanding of other perspectives.
- ▶ Proactive efforts to create the desired future.
- ▶ Finding the prophets and mystics within the community, listening to and working with them.
- ▶ An invitation to be curious.

Variety spice of life for SCL Associate

Whether raising her children to have a global perspective or considering food an avenue for connecting with people, SCL Associate Denise Bowie has some profound perspectives on life matched by several equally interesting experiences.

Growing up on a snowmobile in Wisconsin, she attended the University of California at Santa Barbara, arriving there when the whales were migrating off the coast. With an interest in human resources in a global world, she earned a degree in intercultural psychology. As an Army wife and mom, she applied her learnings when the family lived in Germany for eight years.

Food: a way of sharing

Denise first encountered the SCL Community by accident over 20 years ago in Leavenworth. While taking her child to day care on the campus of the University of Saint Mary (USM), Denise entered the wrong door. She walked into the office of Mother to Mother Ministry directed at that time by Sister Mary Arthel Cline, who invited Denise to take a seat



Denise is all about baking in the kitchen where meals are prepared for SCLs and students of the University of Saint Mary.

and to get involved. Denise began volunteering with Sister Mary Arthel and eventually in the president's office and mailroom at USM when her youngest was in first grade.

Her next venture/adventure took Denise to culinary school at Johnson County Community College. She enrolled in the executive chef program and took an extra pastry course. Denise completed her internship at the National Golf Club, Parkville, Mo.

With her three children in junior high and high school, and recently divorced, Denise opened a catering and baking business in 2005. She named it "Random Acts of Baking" with the tagline "Because there is so



much to celebrate.” She participated in the Kauffman Foundation entrepreneurship program and developed a food philosophy that she has carried with her.

Denise sought to provide food that would amaze her clients with ingredients and quality, and keep the conversations going among guests gathered for observances or celebrations. “Food and the spiritual gift of hospitality bring people together,” she believes. “A cake is a symbol of the occasion and a way of sharing.”

In 2012, Denise transitioned to a food service position at the SCLs and the University of Saint Mary. She began as a cook, and then became a baker, putting her culinary skills to good use.

SCL and global connections

Through family relocations and life transitions, Denise kept up a correspondence with Sister Mary Arthel. In time, Denise accepted Sister’s invitation to become an SCL Associate. She made her commitment on Earth Day 2015 and recalls being thrilled that so many Sisters came to the ceremony. She appreciates that they continue to be supportive and that she has a chance to share in what the SCLs do and in their mission, both as an SCL Associate and as an employee of Morrison Healthcare that manages the SCL and University of Saint Mary food service department.

Denise retains global connections through service on the board of a children’s home in Nairobi, Kenya.



Visiting over lunch in the Mother House dining room, from left Sisters Jean Martin Dawson and Julia Golkoski; Denise; and Sister Mary Pat Lenahan.

She travels to the African country every year and considers it “important to keep coming back for the kids and to help them have consistency in their lives.”

If variety is the spice of life, Denise has it in good measure and shares it in return.

SCL Associate Advisory Board welcomes new members

The SCL Associate Advisory Board blessed and welcomed three new members during its meeting on Saturday, Oct. 13. Associates joining the board include Margaret Richards (Kansas City, Mo.); Bob Schimoler (Leavenworth, Kan.); and Sister Mary Lex Smith (Leavenworth, Kan).

The board reviewed the “Commitments to Co-create Our Future,” which were written by Associates and Candidates who attended the July gatherings at the Mother House. (There will be more information about these commitments in the coming year.) Additionally, they discussed understanding the importance of liminal time as transitional and transformational, and the realm of possibilities this time holds for creating something new. They also explored opportunities to bring awareness of the Vincentian charism to a wider audience.

The SCL Associate Advisory Board meets twice annually.



The SCL Associate Advisory Board, left to right, front row: Margaret Richards, Tom Landry, Megan Trout and Bob Schimoler; middle row: Terri Butel, Lisa Cherry and Sister Mary Lex Smith; and back row: Dana Glade-Yaussy, Bobby Lavinder, Sister Phyllis Stowell and Judy Wohletz.



Book Review

'Retreat' essential to discover God within

Barton, Ruth Haley (2018). *Invitation to Retreat: The Gift and Necessity of Time Away with God*. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press.



by Sister Mary Pat Lenahan
SCL Candidate/
Novitiate Director

How do you feel when you receive an invitation from someone special to you? This question helps inform and shape the premise of this book. Author Ruth Haley Barton expands upon the many invitations involved in God's special invitation to experience extended time and space in retreat, basking in God's loving and merciful presence. The author reminds us that today the word "retreat" has taken on many different meanings and connotations for businesses, various groups and strategic planning.

Another term utilized today is "strategic withdrawal" (p. 9). This is a much clearer description of a spiritual retreat to take time apart with the intent to replenish and recharge body, spirit and soul. Barton uses a quote from Rumi, "I have lived too long where I am reachable" (p. 9) to illustrate this need to regroup. Technology has

enabled and encouraged the 24/7 continual connection with business and social colleagues. Connectivity and busyness often override people's longing to "unplug" for silence, solitude and inner stillness.

Sources of exhaustion

The author quotes Henri Nouwen (p. 23), "We aren't rest-filled people who occasionally become restless; we are restless people who sometimes find rest." This describes why often people do not realize they are exhausted and just need time to rest and relax. Barton refers to Catherine Doherty's belief that people seek a quiet, lonely place, where they can discover the God within (p. 27).

The author says that it is important to know and name the sources of exhaustion, so we can better respond to God's invitation to retreat. She offers some possible causes such as:

- ▶ Acting out of a sense of ought or should.
- ▶ Expressing difficulty in receiving help from others.
- ▶ Living in a performance mode rather than authentic being.
- ▶ Having few boundaries as to availability.
- ▶ Carrying the burden of unhealed wounds or unresolved issues.
- ▶ Experiencing information overload.
- ▶ Being enveloped in our own willfulness, where willingness can seem stifled (p. 35).





“Therefore, the Lord waits
to be gracious to you.”

— Isaiah 30:18

Barton invites the reader to reflect on which of these sources of exhaustion may resonate more than others for greater self-awareness.

‘Let go, let God’

After sharing this path to prayerful reflection and greater self-knowledge, Barton touches on how each of us has particular rhythms that affect our lives. I know that I am comfortable within a specific rhythm for myself, some of which is imposed by times, seasons and schedules. There are other rhythms that I find work for me in my life and ministry.

Because we are called to be service-oriented, we can also tend to be somewhat arrogant in our self-expectations. The author reminds readers that we cannot “fix” everything and that we need to “let go and let God.” This requires faith, trust and, sometimes, just getting out of the way of God’s loving and merciful presence. It means letting go of control and surrendering to God’s Divine Providence. Undergirding all is the humility and self-knowledge to nourish and nurture our relationship with God in daily prayer as well as during the extended time and space of retreat days. This silence, solitude and presence can open the heart to listening with the ear of the heart and receptivity to God’s invitation and call.

This receptivity can lead us to seeing God’s presence in our daily lives and ministries. This can enable us to be more personally present and responsive to God’s presence and mercy as well as to others whom we

encounter. As we are more open to God’s presence, we can be more attentive to discerning God’s wisdom in our decisions and choices. These opportunities can open us to greater transformation.

Discovering surprises of God’s love

If we heed the suggestions and invitations in this book, we will realize the need and gift of time apart for reflection, prayer, relaxation and listening through extended times and spaces in retreat. When doing so, the author suggests taking only those items that will enrich the soul such as Scripture, a journal, a spiritual reading book, and ourselves.

Barton also outlines different types of retreats, ways to prepare, what one might expect, openness to surprises by God, planning, fixed-hour prayers, and preparation for re-entry with reflection on the gifts one might bring to loved ones from the retreat.

I found this book on God’s invitation to retreat very worthwhile and a most welcome addition in our busy world and lives that are ultra-connected via technology. I encourage everyone seeking a greater knowledge of self and a deeper relationship with God, and those striving to be the very best that God has created them to be to read this simple, yet profound book. It is full of common sense, insight and the wisdom to seek the God within. One never knows the generous surprises of God’s great love! As the author reminds us from Isaiah 30:18, “Therefore, the Lord waits to be gracious to you” (p. 121).



Beyond All Borders

New social justice coordinator hits the road running



Sister Therese Bangert, SCL social justice coordinator for 16 years, hands a mission cross to John Shively who assumed the position in July 2018.

John Shively joined staff of the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth (SCLs) in late July as the new coordinator of the Office of Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation. John fills the position held by Sister Therese Bangert since 2002. Sister Therese will remain involved with issues in Kansas.

John anticipates that his new position with the SCL Community will allow him to work at the intersection of his faith and experience and on behalf of social justice. He will direct his energies to education and advocacy on issues including the environment, human trafficking, immigration and other concerns of the Sisters and SCL Associates. Additionally, John will be available to help facilitate social justice efforts in which SCLs are involved.

In September and October, John met with groups of SCLs in

Colorado, Kansas and Montana to brainstorm about pressing social issues. Sisters also shared ways they want to be involved in advocacy.

"In our continued commitment



During a listening session at the SCL Mother House, John exchanges ideas with Sister Marie de Paul Combo, the first SCL appointed social justice coordinator for the Community.

to work for justice and charity, John brings his talents and new perspectives to the table," says Sister Eileen Haynes, SCL Councilor and social justice liaison. "His work will involve the redesign of our committee structure with emphasis on critical issues locally, nationally and globally. We welcome John and look forward to collaborating with him in his new role."

As part of his responsibilities, John will interface with social justice coordinators of other member congregations of the Charity Federation. He will also serve as the SCL Community's liaison to the Federation's NGO at the United Nations.

John recently completed his master's degree in international affairs at Marquette University, Milwaukee. His graduate studies focused on globalization and inequality, Catholic Social Teaching and human rights.

Originally from Coffeyville, Kan., John earned his bachelor's degree in political science from Washburn University, Topeka. While at Washburn, he traveled internationally to study political processes in the United Kingdom, South Korea and Japan. He also served an extended internship with the Kansas Legislature.

John, a resident of Lansing, Kan., is a member of St. Francis de Sales Parish. He is an active volunteer program coordinator with the American Legion Boys State of Kansas initiative that provides leadership development for high school juniors through role-play civic exercises.



Blessings! ¡Bendiciones!

As part of the observance of the 160th anniversary of the SCL Community, the planning committee invited Sisters and SCL Associates to write and submit poems based on the theme “Grace has its moments.”

During Morning Prayer to open the anniversary observance, Joanne Bodner, SCL Associate, read her poem selected as most reflective of the SCL charism and the spirit of 160 years of SCL history.



Joanne Bodner, SCL Associate, reads her poem during Morning Prayer that opened the 160th anniversary observance of the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth on Aug. 1.

Guiding Grace

by Joanne Records Bodner, SCLA

Years past, our band of faith-filled founders
Followed a hallowed call to distant lands,
Heeding a need beyond seeds of doubt,
Despair, stopping not until they reached a
Prairie spot amid sweet sunflowers, picking
Sister petals, blowing them west with wind,
Falling on soil ‘tween mountains and ocean,
Dipping their roots and blooming again.

We seekers this day now bow and pray,
How can we follow these Holy women?
Face a future uncertain and fearsome
As the barren frontier they once embraced?

Listen! Our mother whispers from the spire,
Accompanied by her precious sister-choir,
Love others humbly, go forward simply,
Find the good enshrined in unity.
Her fingers reach out, touching our own,
A link to Grace guiding her long ago,
Propelling us forth ‘til we see our world
Aglow with petals of peace and charity.

— 2018



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