

Voices of Charity

Summer 2012

Celebration of Charity:
Five SCLs mark
Golden Jubilees

pages 3-8

Heart of the Matter:
Going inside the walls
with Bethany Ministry

pages 16-17



A publication of the
SISTERS OF CHARITY
OF LEAVENWORTH



SISTERS OF CHARITY OF LEAVENWORTH

Mission Statement

Impelled by the love of Christ,
we, the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth,
offer every loving service in our power
to meet the critical needs
of God's people.

Vision Statement

As Sisters of Charity we commit ourselves here and now
to embrace anew the charism given us by Vincent, Louise,
Mother Xavier:

to love the poor,
to love one another,
to live simply,
and to unite the whole of our lives
in the poor and loving Christ.

COVER PHOTO: All smiles in Annunciation Chapel at the SCL
Mother House, Leavenworth, Kan. – Golden Jubilarians, left to right,
front row, Sisters Karen Guth, Elizabeth Skalicky, Ann Lucia Apodaca;
back row, Michael Delores Allegri and Virginia Bartolac.

in this issue



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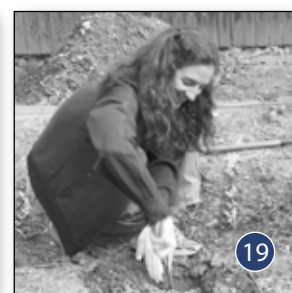
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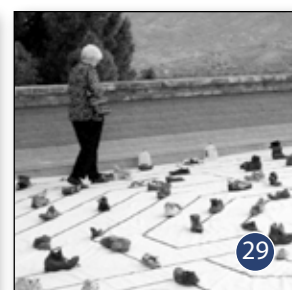
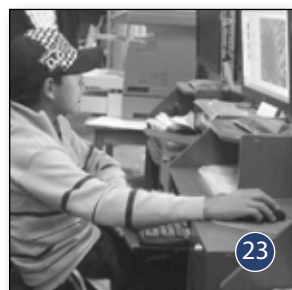
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Community Director



Sister Maureen Hall

Jubilee. A time of celebration. A time of remembering.
A time of gathering with family and friends.

It's our tradition as Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth to come together annually in Leavenworth to mark the golden anniversaries of our members. This year, we celebrate five SCLs who are each marking 50 years of ministry. We extend our heartfelt congratulations to Sisters Michael Delores Allegri, Ann Lucia Apodaca, Virginia Bartolac, Karen Guth and Elizabeth Skalicky. As you read the stories they've shared in this *Voices of Charity*, you will find ribbons of service, dedication and commitment to our SCL charism.

We trace that charism – the spirit of humility, simplicity and charity – to our Vincentian roots. In 17th century France, St. Vincent de Paul was a priest for his times and ahead of his time. With St. Louise de Marillac, he established the Daughters of Charity, a group of women who consecrated their lives to serving people in need. In the early 1800s, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton and her Sisters adopted the rules and constitution of the Daughters for a new religious community in this country. Not too many years later, Mother Xavier Ross, our own foundress, brought the Vincentian spirit and zeal to the Midwest.

The deep heart of this charism dates back even further to Jesus himself whose life emulated what the Prophet Micah said the Lord requires of us: "Only to do justice and to love goodness, and to walk humbly with your God." (Micah 6:8)

It's this charism that we celebrate during Jubilee at the Mother House, that we strive to live through our lives as vowed women religious, and that we invite others – our Associates, our Heartland Charity Volunteers, our Xavier Community members, persons within our sponsored ministries, and you – to share. That's the beauty of a charism: it's a gift and a blessing that's meant to be shared.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sister Maureen Hall".

Sister Maureen Hall
SCL Community Director

Congratulations to the five Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth marking their Golden Jubilees this year. We wish them blessings in abundance.



Celebration *of* Charity

Sister Michael Delores Allegri



It was a dark and stormy night – or so I’ve been told – when I arrived in this world. And it was in the midst of a “powerful snowstorm.” Maybe that’s why I like the snow so much! I was born Jan. 27, 1942. My parents, John Joseph and Bess (Votova) Allegri, and older brother, John Michael were the welcoming committee. Three years after my arrival,

we welcomed younger brother, William Charles (Bill). That completed our immediate family.

However, there were always relatives living with us for various periods of time. Betty Jo was with us long enough that I thought of her as an older sister rather than a cousin. And my Dad’s Mother lived with us from the time I was in sixth-grade until her death. She was our only living grandparent. My grandparents and oldest uncles were Italian immigrants, and when they first came to the states they lived with Grandma’s aunt and her family.

Therefore, as we were growing up there were many gatherings with lots of extended family. Mom’s side of the family was smaller as she only had a brother and a sister who were born in Czechoslovakia. They also were very much a part of our lives. (Mom’s brother is the one who introduced Mom and Dad to each other). My parents bought their house before I was born, and they lived in that house until their deaths. I guess you could say it was a stable life!

In June 1957, John was killed in a car accident. He was 17. Bill married Kathy (Delumpa), and they have six children.

Sacha and Jeff (Barton) will be married in September 2012. Jason and Esther have three children, Jon, Gabby and Michael. Nadja and Jon (Conway) have two girls, Sarah and Caitlin. Kirsten and Jon (Williams) are expecting their first. Last but not least are Jonas and Zachary.

We began our education in the local public school. I’m not sure why our parents decided to change to the parish school, but I started second-grade at St. Augustine, Kansas City, Mo., and first met the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth. It was during a rainy recess one day that year that I knew I would someday be a Sister. That’s a story too long to write about here, but I would be happy to share with anyone who’s interested.

Sister Mary Monica Peterson was my second-grade teacher. I remember wondering how I could be a Sister like her if I grew taller than she was. (I was one of the tallest in my class.) One day in sixth-grade, Sister Eileen Sheehy asked for a volunteer to help the principal and first-grade teacher, Sister Mary Edmund Gray. From that moment, I began my career as a “substitute” teacher. Girls’ competitive sports were just beginning at that time, and I was on St. A’s first volleyball team! My freshman year in high school, I assisted Ann McGuire in coaching the grade school team. When she entered the SCLs, I became the girls’ coach all through high school.

I attended Bishop Hogan High School staffed by the SCLs. I joined the marching band to avoid taking physical education. I didn’t even play an instrument! I talked with the band director, Mr. Davis. He asked what instrument I played. I asked what he had available, and he said trumpet first and then again at the end. So began my love of the trumpet! Band immediately became my favorite class.

At some point during our postulancy, we were asked to list our three choices for ministry.

I wrote: 1. Work in an orphanage. 2. Teach first-grade. 3. Work with Sister Mary Hubert Gockel.

And so for the first 23 years, I taught high school! — Sister Michael Delores Allegri



Celebration of Charity

After three years of college life (two at the University of Saint Mary, Leavenworth, Kan., and one at Avila University, Kansas City, Mo.), I entered the Community. At some point during our postulancy, we were asked to list our three choices for ministry. I wrote: 1. Work in an orphanage. 2. Teach first-grade. 3. Work with Sister Mary Hubert Gockel.

And so for the first 23 years, I taught high school! I loved every minute of it – well, maybe not every minute – but I am very grateful for that opportunity. I taught my first year at Billings Central in Montana, followed by seven years at Hayden, Topeka, Kan.; three years at St. Pius X, Kansas City, Mo.; and 10 years at Bishop Hogan. At Hayden and St. Pius X, I started the girls' sports programs.

I then changed ministries to work at Mount St. Vincent Home, Denver, as a mental health worker. After four years, I returned to Kansas City to be principal of St. Monica Middle School and later St. Monica Elementary School. Seven years later, I was back at Mount St. Vincent Home. On March 19, 1999, I became a foster parent for the first time and since then have cared for 55 children. I have been invited to serve on several state and county committees working to improve the quality of care our children receive. I am most grateful to the Community for the support I have received in this ministry.

Mother Xavier said, "It is wisdom to pause and look back and see by what straight or twisting paths we have arrived at the place we find ourselves." It seems to me my journey has been rather twisted, but it has been a great one. I am filled with love and gratitude for all who have been with me, especially all the SCLs who by their example have taught me much, as I have answered God's call with my "yes!"

Sister Ann Lucia Apodaca



This is how Mom told me my story: "It was a cold wintry day, Feb. 6, 1940. Your Dad was busy keeping our little farmhouse warm, while Grandma Apodaca prepared things for our family doctor to help deliver you. You were born around 9 p.m. You had curly hair, and I would fold your hair around my finger and give you ringlets. Your Daddy would show you off, and he would say, 'Esta es nuestra hita.' (This is our little daughter.) Your Grandma never let us forget that your birth kept her from going dancing that evening. Your

Months later, while dancing with a friend, I was thinking, "Well, what am I going to do with my life?" Something within me said, "Be a nun!" I thought, "Oh, sure!" God led me step by step, this is the only way I can explain it. I was not that brave to accomplish what followed. — Sister Ann Lucia Apodaca

sister Beatrice wanted to hold you and comb your hair, and she tried to help me dress you. Your brothers, Alfredo and Manuel, kept touching your little fat cheeks."

Being the center of attention did not last long because soon came Frankie, then Inez, Evelin, Danny, Carol, Helen, Henrietta and Lucille. We were each other's first friends. We took care of one other, we entertained each other, we helped each other with our school work, but most of all we tried to obey our parents, who put our needs before theirs.

My Dad was not school-learned, but he was logical and philosophical, and he was experience-smart. He wanted all of us to get an education. My Mother helped us and encouraged us to help each other. From Mom and Dad we inherited the desire to learn and to help others, and we received a work ethic.

Back to Mom's story: "The day you were baptized, your godparents, Aunt Rosie and Uncle Gene, came early to dress you and take you to church to be baptized. It was our custom that the godparents took care of the baptism while the parents prepared a celebration for the occasion. When the godparents returned home, they presented the child to the parents, and the parents received the baby. 'With great honor and pride,' your godparents said, 'we took your child to church. We made a promise to see that she would be raised a Catholic, and that we would encourage her to follow Jesus with all her heart. We now present to you your baptized daughter, Margarita Dorotea.' Your Dad and I responded, 'Together we stand in love, and we welcome our daughter, Margarita Dorotea, in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, and we promise to raise her as a Catholic.'"

This was the birth of my bonding with God and my family.

After graduating from high school, I left Windsor, Colo., to work in Denver. I took with me my family's love, God's blessing, a frightened heart and a dream to fulfill. The dream to fulfill was not in Denver, but it was where the awakening began. After a year there, I got engaged to be married, but I did not like the feeling within me. The thought that there had to be more to life was still in my soul, even after I got engaged. I broke the engagement. Months later, while



dancing with a friend, I was thinking, "Well, what am I going to do with my life?" Something within me said, "Be a nun!" I thought, "Oh, sure!"

God led me step by step; this is the only way I can explain it. I was not that brave to accomplish what followed. The day after the dance, I read that there was a seminar introducing different religious orders. I took it as a sign, and I attended the seminar. I was impressed with the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth. They gave the presentation with great joy and enjoyed each other. I told my Uncle Gene that I wanted to be a Sister of Charity of Leavenworth. He introduced me to Monsignor Berry who within two weeks brought me to the Mother House. I met Mother Mary Ancilla Spoor. I applied. My prayer that I left at the Holy Ghost Church every time I passed by it was answered: "Lord, show me what to do with my life."

The Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth have given me, Sister Ann Lucia Apodaca, opportunities to grow in the reality of God's love. God has blessed me indeed with all that I received and with all that I shared!

These words gave me strength: "You can do all things through Him who strengthens you," from St. Paul, and from Mom's letters: "Your Mom and Dad love you and miss you so much, Lucy and Dan Apodaca."

Sister Virginia Bartolac



Jubilee, a great time for remembrances and gratitude, begins for me with family. My earliest days were guided by faith-filled parents, Stephen and Louise Bartolac, who valued friendships and reached out impartially to others. Given financial constraints, they provided a loving family environment and made numerous sacrifices in raising five children, each with 12 years of Catholic education.

Oldest was my brother Ed, a GM electrical engineer, who raised a family of nine children. My oldest sister Therese held executive secretary positions in Kansas City, and she has six children. Sister Mary Ann taught elementary students and as principal developed progressive curriculums. While in Lawrence, she continued to link Kansas University programs and student teachers with St. John's School. My sister Helen Mae overcame many disabilities with cerebral palsy. She gifted our family with her love and worked on a home team for the SCL Relay mailings.

I remember fondly many SCLs who brought laughter and solace to my family through home and hospital calls, and

also made annual Santa visits. I am extremely grateful for Sister Mary Ann's generous, compassionate care in helping our parents live with dignity in their final years.

Liberal arts at Saint Mary College, Leavenworth, Kan., opened the worlds of music, art, theater and literature, and offered many leadership opportunities. I remember freshman orientation when we were reminded that Saint Mary was a stopping off place on the way to eternity. I worked summers at Santa Fe Railroad to finance college costs. In 1961, I taught a double session at Bishop Ward High School, Kansas City, Kan., with five straight afternoon English classes that were overflowing. That summer, I toured Europe. I had a seat in close view of Pope John XXIII at Castel Gandolfo, strode atop St. Peter's Basilica, enjoyed Monaco's beaches, experienced the waters at Lourdes, and admired Austrian Alps.

Within weeks, I entered the SCLs, shortly before Vatican II's opening session in 1962. The Council's spirit and God's Providence have illuminated my path of 50 years, as I have strived to live the Charity charism within a Vincentian framework attuned to the needs of the time in a globalized world.

I taught almost two decades in three high schools, including six years as associate administrator at Bishop Ward High School, meeting students' learning thresholds and praising their accomplishments. At Ward, I initiated courses like film arts, and also developed the Plus One program that was a three-day, community-based experience that offered career and leisure opportunities for the entire school.

I remember challenges like alternately teaching French students and journalism students during the same class, and also having about 50 freshmen through senior students in a remedial reading class. Mission assignments influenced several graduate degrees – English at Minnesota University and educational administration at Kansas University. The SCL Community Director asked me to study canon law broadly in order to be a consultant for the Community

The [Vatican] Council's spirit and God's Providence have illuminated my path of 50 years, as I have strived to live the Charity charism within a Vincentian framework attuned to the needs of the time in a globalized world. — Sister Virginia Bartolac



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and for others seeking canonical help. Beginning in 1984, I spent five years at Catholic University in Washington, D.C., acquiring a doctorate in canon law, and in 1998 completed a theology degree at St. Louis University. I have taught deacon candidates, discussed canonical issues with clergy, and given workshops on canon law issues.

A unique mission was five years as a collegiate judge in Atlanta's Court of Appeals, interacting with other competent canonists from five eastern dioceses, who rightfully referenced canon law in light of Vatican II. I became a state-certified mediator in Georgia and Kansas. Most memorable was bringing divorced parents to agree on issues of health, education and visitation for their children at the Domestic Court Services in Wyandotte County. I served as chancellor in the Diocese of Jefferson City, Mo. Several years later, I helped to instill a more wholesome integrity in two Midwestern tribunals, despite resistance.

My various interests include sports, reading, traveling, mountain climbing and cooking. Over many years, I have facilitated graced moments with hundreds of students and assisted many thousands as a canonist. I continue judging marriage cases for several southern dioceses and anticipate more Spirit-awakenings in the Church and greater participation in Church life for all the faithful.

Sister Karen Guth



Born in 1943, I was the fourth child of my parents, Edward and Mary (Hueter) Guth. The brother immediately preceding me in life died in infancy, and as a result, I was especially loved; some might say spoiled. My other two siblings, John and Virginia, are seven and five years older respectively. My entire childhood and adolescence were spent in Topeka, Kan., living a normal small town existence. There were day trips to visit relatives on farms in northeast Kansas. The only family home I remember was a two-story house in which my Father added an upstairs apartment for my Grandmother and Aunt Clare. Mother always knew where to find me when I disappeared. I enjoyed watching my Grandmother crochet and "helping her" quilt, as well as having my aunt's undivided attention when she read to me.

As a child, I didn't recognize that we were poor, but I knew my Father had a second job in the evening. My Mother did her part to keep expenses down by sewing our clothes. I was always fascinated by her ability to cut a pattern out of newspaper. I was also very proud of the dresses she made me, especially those for particular occasions like my First Holy Communion and formals for weddings and high school dances.

The Catholic Church was integral to our family life. My Father was a Sunday usher and drove the Sisters whenever they needed a ride. My brother was a server. My sister gathered us for the rosary. My Mother and I attended daily Mass. At that time, it was in Latin, and I came to know the responses better than the altar boys. I was jealous of them because I wanted to serve and was positive I could do it just as well, if not better than any boy.

My life changed abruptly when I was 10, and my Father died of lung cancer. He was 39 years old. I have a vivid memory of my Mother crying. I remember also trying to be good and happy, thinking that would cheer her up. With my Father's death, my Mother found employment as a seamstress at a dry cleaners, and my brother and sister, being old enough, found jobs as well. The neighborhood was nearly void of young people, so I began to spend time alone reading. Another favorite activity was climbing the neighbor's maple tree and watching the world go by, unnoticed in my high perch.

Wanting to be employed like the rest of my family, I began to weave potholders and sell them door-to-door. On Mondays at the corner grocery store, I stocked shelves and helped put out the weekly mailed advertisement. I also worked for my aunt, assisting with her two young children, tending the garden and doing both outside and inside household chores. During the summers when the Sisters left town, I was head sacristan, and during the school year, I would set out meals for the Sisters and clean up afterwards.

My education from first-grade through college bachelor's degree was guided by the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth. Education was valued and encouraged in my family. My sixth-grade teacher awakened in me a love for mathematics. I worked hard and was recognized as a good student, graduating at the top of the class from grade school, and third, but still the top girl, from high school.

Around Christmas when I was a high school senior, Sister Mary Simeon Dapogny, whom I was helping with her classroom duties, asked me what I was going to do with my life. I immediately told her I was going to college a year and then would become a Sister of Charity. I surprised myself with the response and wondered why I said it. I received a scholarship and did indeed go to Saint Mary College in



Being confronted with a possible shortened life span changes perspectives. The scripture, "The gift you have received, give as a gift" (Matt. 10:8), became intensely important to me. Doing spiritual direction became a priority. — Sister Karen Guth

Leavenworth for a year. In 1962, I entered the novitiate of the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth.

My teaching career began at St. Daniel the Prophet School in Chicago. I was assigned a fifth-grade self-contained classroom. Because of other Sisters being transferred, I was told on Jan. 1 that the next day I would be teaching mathematics in the departmental junior high grades. I continued at that level completing four years in Chicago and two years at St. Mary's School in Joplin, Mo. At that point, I was one of only a few Sisters who hadn't completed her studies, so I returned to Saint Mary College, Leavenworth, Kan., for a year to earn my bachelor's degree with a major in mathematics and a minor in elementary education. Continuing my teaching career, I was assigned to St. Charles Borromeo School in Kansas City, Mo., for the next 14 years.

In 1980, I began working on a master's in theology with an emphasis in spirituality. For six summers, I traveled to St. Michael's College in Vermont and enjoyed the change of pace. At the suggestion of my spiritual director, this adventure was originally entered into for personal enrichment. I now sense God guiding that decision as preparation for this part of my life's journey.

My teaching career moved in 1986 to Grand Junction, Colo., where I continued to work with 13 and 14 year olds in religion and mathematics. In 1993, nominated by my principal, I received the Sister Miriam Joseph Farrell Distinguished Teacher Award from the National Catholic Education Association. Being one of 12 so honored was a thrill and a definite high point for me as an educator.

Offered a sabbatical in 1996, I went to Wellsprings in Glens Falls, N.Y. The directed retreat there was a graced time and proved to be a turning point for me. Missioned to Denver, I worked for the Archdiocesan Housing Committee, Inc., and completed the formation program for spiritual directors, an offering of the Vincentian Studies Institute. Inspired by Vincentian spirituality, I helped establish and coordinated the Making Choices program at the Denver Women's Correctional Facility. This decision-making skills course bridged the gap between business women as mentors and incarcerated women as students.

Returning to Leavenworth in 2004, I joined the staff of our own Marillac Center. This move gave me the opportunity to be involved in the student mentoring program at the University of Saint Mary.

I was not in Leavenworth long before I became aware of The Keeler Women's Center, Kansas City, Kan., a ministry of the Benedictine Sisters. The center offers a variety of services to women for their personal and spiritual development. I began doing spiritual direction there and have been blessed abundantly as a result.

In December 2006, I was diagnosed with malignant breast cancer. The following year was one of surgeries, chemotherapy and radiation. Being confronted with a possible shortened life span changes perspectives. The scripture, "The gift you have received, give as a gift" (Matt. 10:8), became intensely important to me. Doing spiritual direction became a priority.

I believe I have been taken by God, blessed with an abundance of gifts, broken and emptied so the loving God within may be shared. This is an ongoing process in which I will need to be faithful, be still, be patient and let God do the work.

Sister Elizabeth Skalicky



One of my favorite quotes from our foundress, Mother Xavier Ross, is: "It is wisdom to pause and look back and see by what straight and twisting ways we have arrived at the place we find ourselves." Each time I reflect upon this quote, my gratitude deepens for God's call to be a Sister of Charity. This gratitude includes the many individuals who have guided, directed and supported me on my journey.

I was born in our farm home near Bocket, N.D., to my parents, Katherine and Alfred Skalicky. I am the second to the youngest of nine children: Minnie, Edward, Sylvia, Loretta, Dorothy, Genevieve, Catherine, myself and Joanne. Both our immediate and extended families were closely bonded. In my early years, we moved to a farm near Lawton, N.D., and later into the small town. Throughout my life, I witnessed my parents' great trust in Divine Providence.

My elementary and secondary education took place in the same school in Lawton. During grade school, our formal religious instruction was given after Mass by devout women in the parish. We received a new pastor when I was in high



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school, and he gave all religious instruction in our public high school.

During my junior year of high school, I felt certain I was to enter a religious community. I shared this with my close friend who was a Lutheran. I didn't have answers to all of her questions, so she tried to discourage me. My reluctance to answer the call to be a religious was uncertainty about the lifestyle and which community to join.

As a senior I debated between being a nurse or a teacher. Our county superintendent had taught in our school, and she encouraged us to become teachers. There was a shortage of teachers for rural schools. Several of us responded to her request, and after a summer session of methods courses, my teaching career began.

I believe my Mother planted the seed of my vocation. During a severe winter blizzard, our home was cold so I wrapped myself in a shawl as I went about the house. My Mother said to me in our native Czech, "You look like a nun." I asked her what a nun was. I don't recall her exact words, but the desire to be a person following Jesus in prayer and service took root in my heart. Members of my home parish and several priests had encouraged me to consider a religious vocation. I made arrangements to spend a week of discernment with the Benedictine Sisters in Bismarck, N.D. While there, I made plans to enter in the fall. However, when I returned home my Mother had had a stroke. In July, my Father was diagnosed with cancer, and the doctors recommended treatment in Rochester, Minn. With this turn of events, my decision changed to remain and assist my parents.

After the death of my parents, I chose to go to Montana where two of my sisters lived. I obtained a teaching position in Billings, Mont. I met the Sisters of Charity from St. Patrick's convent, and they made arrangements for me to be interviewed by Mother Mary Ancilla Spoor. After that meeting, my future took a new direction. An emergency appendectomy delayed my joining the Community from August to September.

Over these 50 years I have been fortunate to remain in the ministry of education. Being in the educational environment with students continues to energize me. This ministry

has taken me to Illinois, Kansas, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska and Wyoming. I have served both as a classroom teacher and administrator. There are joyful memories from each mission; however, there are two that are most memorable. The first was being part of the reopening of a Catholic elementary school in Butte, Mont., 19 years after several had been closed. The second event was being part of the faculty for the restructuring and relocation of the new Xavier Catholic School in Leavenworth, Kan. This took place in fall 2011. In all the places I have ministered, I have been impressed with the support given by parents, priests and the parishes.

Our Community has afforded me wonderful educational opportunities. I have been fortunate to hear renowned theologians hosted by the University of Saint Mary. I attended St. Thomas University in Houston for a master's program in religious education. Summers in California provided experience with special needs students in Santa Monica. Later, I studied at the University of San Francisco for a master's in private school administration. My life-changing lesson came the summer I joined six of our SCLs to visit our Sisters serving in three locations in Peru, South America. We spent time in Piura, Chalaco and Chuschi. Each area had a unique need which our Sisters served. Even the topography is unique to each locale. In all these areas, I was touched by the peace and joy which radiated from the residents. Their faith and trust in God, and their simplicity amid their struggles and with meager possessions have left a lasting impression upon me.

Among the endless blessings I have received through our Community are the opportunities to grow spiritually. In addition to the daily provisions for deepening our spiritual lives, the Community continues to provide workshops and speakers to enrich our spirituality. We are encouraged to attend prayer days and retreats at various locations that provide time to deepen our relationships with our God. There are two particular opportunities which were key spiritual events in my life. The first was a 30-day retreat at a Jesuit retreat house in Portland, Ore. The second was a three-month sabbatical in upstate New York. Besides these particular opportunities, I also give praise and thanks for the daily witness of the spiritual lives of our Sisters.

I give thanks now and into the future for the blessings of my family, faith, friends and the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth. All has been beyond my imagining and so, "I look forward to the good that is yet to be."

I believe my Mother planted the seed of my vocation. During a severe winter blizzard, our home was cold so I wrapped myself in a shawl as I went about the house. My Mother said to me in our native Czech, "You look like a nun." I asked her what a nun was. I don't recall her exact words, but the desire to be a person following Jesus in prayer and service took root in my heart. — Sister Elizabeth Skalicky

Still helping people – and cats!



Sister Marie Bernard Martin (right) is an avid gardener – indoors and out! She transplanted seedlings with the help of Lorene Farrington.

worked with Sister Clara Scherr on a Sioux reservation in Eagle Butte, S.D., where she taught in a two-year nursing program. Next, public health nursing in Wyoming called on Sister Marie Bernard's talents for 13 years – first as a nurse and then as director of nursing – as she traveled to different counties immunizing children, teaching prenatal classes and following up with disease reports.

At age 58, Sister Marie Bernard returned to college to become a physician assistant. When she learned that physicians weren't accepting new Medicare patients because of poor reimbursement, Sister thought, "I could provide many of the services people need."

Her experience, training and commitment landed her a position with Medicine Bow Rural Health Clinic that serves primarily older, retired persons. She made many friends among her patients over 13 years. In her own "retirement," Sister Marie Bernard continues to serve the elders of Medicine Bow, Wyo. – providing transportation, helping with yard work and planting a community garden.

Sister's known as the "cat lady" – taking in feral cats and kittens, getting them spayed and neutered, and finding them homes. She's also the "plant lady" – growing a variety of indoor plants and exchanging clippings with friends.

And most likely, Sister Marie Bernard is the "helping lady" – continuing to serve the small community in whatever ways she can.

Almost right up to the front door of the SCL Mother House in 1958, Sister Marie Bernard Martin kept hoping an excuse would develop to prevent her from entering the Community. But the odds were stacked in favor of her vocation.

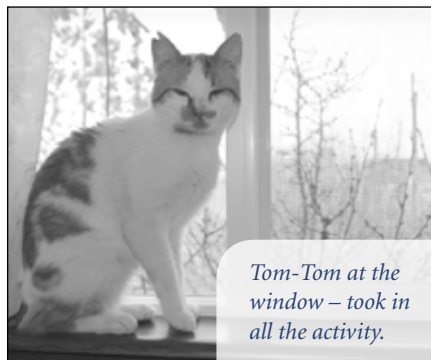
The SCLs whom she had met as a nursing student at St. Vincent Hospital's School of Nursing in Billings, Mont., were supportive. Sister herself couldn't think of a reason to avoid trying religious life, and she couldn't forget it.

Lifelong health ministry

Almost 54 years later, she reflects on a lifelong health ministry in hospitals, on a Native American reservation, in public health and in a community clinic. Sister Marie Bernard has been a nurse, an educator and a physician assistant. She's held administrative roles, but she preferred working directly with people and responding to their needs.

Her health ministry began in medical-surgical nursing at Saint Joseph Hospital, Denver. From there, Sister Marie Bernard served in Cheyenne, Wyo., and Anaconda and Butte, Mont. In between, she earned her bachelor's degree and eventually her master's in nursing. Returning to Saint Joseph, Sister was responsible for hospital-wide education and oversaw departments including the laboratory, radiology and respiratory therapy.

After time devoted to caring for her Father, Sister Marie Bernard



Tom-Tom at the window – took in all the activity.

B^{owled} over and having

*True confessions overheard at “Just Because 4” –
a night of bowling by SCLs on the alleys
of St. John’s Catholic Club, Kansas City, Kan.*

- Sister Julia Golkoski once bowled with another Sister and two priests on a team called “Holy Rollers.”
- Sister Therese Steiner only bowled once in her whole life.
- As a teenager, Sister Vickie Perkins achieved the whopping bowling score of 9.

Last seen, Sisters Therese and Vickie were avoiding the alleys and happy at the board games’ table.

Other comments wafting through the night:

- On a missed opportunity for a strike, “It’s not fair. Life’s not fair.”
- An excuse, “It’s the getting together; form doesn’t matter.”

A meeting of minds over the score sheets – Sisters Susan Chase (left) and Rosie Kolich.



The Jackson Two ready to roll: Sisters Jane (left) and Judith Jackson.

If it’s all about form, who’s the winner? Email your response to thorvat@scls.org.



Sister Susan Chase



Sister Julia Golkoski



Sister Mary Willoughby



Sister Cele Breen

a great time!

High level discussion
over keeping score.
Standing, Sisters
Theresa Maly, ND,
Therese Steiner;
seated, Mary
Rachel Flynn and
Barbara Schrader.



If you can't beat 'em
and don't want to
join 'em, play board
games instead!
Clockwise from left,
Sisters Marie
Loretta Modrcin,
Vickie Perkins,
Mary Ann Theisen,
Eileen Hurley and
Jean Highberger.

25-year Jubilarians

Congratulations to

Hermana Esther

Vilela Gutiérrez and

Sister Barbara Schrader

who are marking their

25th anniversaries

this year. Watch the next

Voices of Charity

for a special future about

these two silver jubilarians.



Sister Rosie Kolich



Sister Barbara Kushan

SCL adds zest to pastoral ministry

In the late 1970s when Sister Mary Clare Gappa heard parents wishing they had the benefit of the faith formation their children were receiving in Catholic schools, she perceived this as a ministry she could provide.



Three days a week, Coronation of Our Lady Parish hosts a food pantry for the surrounding community. Pictured left to right, Sister Mary Clare Gappa; Bob and Chris Morris; and Pat Julo, director of outreach and maintenance.

After 24 years in elementary school classrooms, she was a teacher at heart and recognized that parents wanted to learn how to apply doctrines of faith to life experiences.

With this goal in mind, Sister Clare earned a master's degree in theological studies from the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, Calif. For the past 28 years, she's been putting this goal into action as pastoral associate at Coronation of Our Lady Parish, Grandview, Mo.

RCIA is her primary ministry, but her work is varied, and she brings new approaches to whatever she does throughout the year – a carryover from her creativity and ingenuity in the grade school classroom. As needed, Sister Clare assists with religious education of children. She coordinates and provides formation for the parish's ministers of care assisted by a co-leader who is a volunteer. She is a diocesan-trained advocate to help with annulments. Sister Clare is

co-chair of the parish's recently named Adult Faith Formation Team intended to develop learning opportunities for parishioners during the Year of Faith starting in October.

In addition, she has coordinated Bible studies, is director of spirituality for the Altar and Rosary Society, and supports the good deeds of the parish food pantry team. Sister Clare has enjoyed adding zest to the parish by helping coordinate major community-building efforts such as the Spring Fling fundraisers and the 50th anniversary celebration.

"It's a privilege to experience the trust people place in me as I strive to help them with their spirituality," Sister Clare said. "I especially love working with people who are searching for God through our RCIA process. I learn from them. This parish community has been family to me and allowed me to be part of their families in a rich way."

Sister Clare works part-time now to care for her Mother Hildegard Gappa who will be 101 in July and

who lives in Billings, Mont. Like daughter, like Mother, Sister Clare said that Hildegard has as her goal to do something kind for someone daily.

Giving other credit where credit is due, Sister Clare acknowledges the SCLs who have influenced her. They include Sister Dominique Long, her former high school teacher in Billings, Mont., who was instrumental in conveying the happiness of religious life to Sister Clare as a student considering religious life. Later, she drew on the experiences of Sisters Cele Breen, Annie Loendorf and Lillian Maguire – all pastoral associates with whom she lived when she was beginning this ministry. Maureen Kelly, a laywoman and noted presenter/writer on RCIA issues, was also a wonderful resource at a neighboring parish.

"They were my mentors," she said with gratitude. "I hope people can see charity, humility and simplicity in the way I do things, carrying out my ministry as an SCL."

Housing ministry x 3 = wonderful way to share

In more ways than one, housing is definitely the ministry of Sisters Ruth Ann Hehn and Joan Williams, Cheyenne, Wyo.

Both serve at Holy Trinity Manor, a 30-unit HUD housing facility for low-income seniors and persons who are disabled. The Manor is operated by Housing Management Services, stemming from the company that Sister Mary Lucy Downey started with Bishop Evans in Denver. Sister Ruth Ann has been site manager since June 1990. Sister Joan is a volunteer who decorates the community room, and prepares the monthly birthday dinner and treats when needed for events.

In addition, in collaboration with the Cheyenne Interfaith Hospitality Network, the two SCLs have opened their house to host families who are homeless. Through this community initiative, nine churches provide dinner and overnight housing for families in a nine-week rotation.

In July 2010, when circumstances changed with their parish's arrangements for serving as host to families, the Sisters stepped up to the plate. Sister Ruth Ann recalled, "Sister Joan, who had just retired, said, 'Why not have them at our house. It's homey and large.'"

Sister Ruth Ann agreed. The Sisters live in a former rectory that can easily accommodate three families or up to nine additional people at a time. "It's marvelous that we have a house that works so well," Sister Ruth Ann

said. "It's the right thing to do."

Families arrive at their home at 4:30 or 5 p.m. Dinner follows with volunteers bringing in evening meals. Following breakfast the next morning, families leave with packed lunches for work or the day center. The churches actively help families locate more permanent housing. For example, a mother and her four children, whom the Sisters had housed before Easter, moved into a trailer that the local Baptist church helped find. There is other transitional housing near where Sisters Ruth Ann and Joan live.

Their third housing ministry dates to a cold snowy morning in late January 2011. Chi Connolly visited Sister Ruth Ann to seek employment at the Manor. When Sister explained that funds were lacking to hire new staff, Chi left the facility. A month later, she returned to the Manor and was taken to the Sisters' home with her suitcase on March 1. Chi has remained part of their community since that time. (See her story in related article.) She lives in the finished basement of the house and moves up to the guest room when families arrive through the Hospitality Network.

"We have a wonderful house, and it's wonderful to share," Sister Joan concluded.



Chi Connolly (left) and Sister Joan Williams.

Guest shares ministry

Chi Connolly has a heart for the homeless families hosted by Sisters Ruth Ann Hehn and Joan Williams. "I've been there," she said referring to being without a home, a job or resources.

A professed, born-again Christian and without a family of her own, Chi continued, "My walk with Jesus hasn't been easy. He's put me in extraordinary places. The Lord put it on my heart to go to Cheyenne [Wyoming]."

And that's where Chi met Sister Ruth Ann Hehn who didn't have a job opening at Holy Trinity Manor but knew residents who needed help. Today, Chi cooks and cleans for a woman who is terminally ill; she serves as eyes for another person who is visually impaired. She pitches in and helps when the Sisters host families in their home where Chi has resided since March 1, 2011.

With her modest income, she's able to purchase her own food and clothing; she's opened a savings account and hopes to buy a vehicle. Chi values that the Sisters have given her the opportunity to serve others. She has also enjoyed meeting other SCLs who come to visit, who share their wisdom and who re-charge her energy and desire to serve.

"God opened the door for me in this community," Chi concluded.



Left to right, Sisters Ruth Ann Hehn and Joan Williams, and Chi Connolly.

OF SPECIAL NOTE

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

Flowers in abundance at Jubilee celebration for Mother House/Ross Hall SCLs



The Mother House/Ross Hall celebration for SCLs marking their 50th, 60th and 70th anniversaries began with prayer and Mass in Ross Chapel. Renewing their vows with papers in hand were (left to right) Sisters Letitia Lenherr, Madonna Fink, Rose Anthony Perko, Mark Friday, Ann Lucia Apodaca, Elizabeth Skalicky and Regina DeCoursey. (Not pictured, Sister Mary Erwin Baker.)

A special Jubilee celebration of SCLs marking landmark anniversaries is an annual rite of spring at the Mother House in Leavenworth, Kan. This year's festivities took place on Saturday, May 5.



Sister Mark Friday (left) and Sister Letitia Lenherr (right), both 60-year jubilarians, received congratulatory wishes from Sister Mary Patricia Kielty.



At the luncheon that followed, Sister Regina DeCoursey, 70-year jubilarian, in her flower finery.



Sister Mary Erwin Baker, 60th anniversary.



Sister Ann Lucia Apodaca, golden jubilarian, in the spotlight at the luncheon celebration.



Sister Rose Anthony Perko is marking 60 years as an SCL.



Sixty years an SCL, Sister Mark Friday.



Sister Madonna Fink enjoyed the celebration of her 60th jubilee.



All dressed up for the party! Sister Elizabeth Skalicky, golden jubilarian.



Swinging with the music highlighting her 60 years in the Community, Sister Letitia Lenherr.



With Sister Anita Sullivan at the wheel, Sister Gloria Solomon in her "shades" for an award-winning rendition of "Big Girls Don't Cry."

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, KS 66048-5054.

Bethany Ministry

inside (and outside) the walls

Every Wednesday evening at 6:15, the Spirit hovers in a special way over three different rooms at the Lansing Correctional Facility (LCF).

Through the metal detectors and past the security checks, volunteers proceed to the minimum, medium and maximum areas of the state penitentiary in Lansing, Kan.

They are greeted by inmates who come to “Catholic call-out” inside the prison walls. When everyone arrives, this is Bethany Ministry – inmates and volunteers gathered together to sing, pray and reflect on readings for the upcoming weekend Mass. The prayer and the fellowship matter a lot to inmates and volunteers, some of whom have been coming for 19 years.

Faith and fellowship

“You guys come in and share your love. We don’t deserve the fellowship, and we don’t get it every day from everybody out there,” inmate Ernesto Martinez said gesturing to the prison yard beyond the window.

“I don’t get this ‘out there’ every day either,” said Michaela Forge, volunteer, referring to life outside the

walls. Michaela is a high school teacher and University of Saint Mary (USM) alumna. She has been part of Bethany Ministry since 2006 when George Steger, SCLA, then her professor at USM, invited her to join.

“I’m a cradle Catholic, and I’ve never been to a group like this where you get to break the scriptures apart for their meaning,” Michaela said.

At home, at peace

“This group on Wednesday night is home to me,” observed Doug Heronemus, an inmate since 1984. “Before, I never went to chapel. I wasn’t Catholic. I wasn’t anything.”

When a friend inside the walls developed cancer, Doug began transporting him to the Catholic call-outs. Doug would leave his friend and go to the yard except for chapel services when he remained. Father Ed Hays, chaplain at the time, approached Doug and eventually baptized him.



Left to right, David Harley, Rupert Pate and I.G. Wimbish IV. David, who will be a USM sophomore, called the Bethany Ministry “a ministry of presence.”



Sister Nancy Bauman and Joshua Olga (right) listen while Ernesto Martinez (center) contributes to the discussion.

**“If Bethany [Ministry] has any message to give,
it is that each and every individual is God’s beloved.”**

— *Mary Jo Steger, SCLA, deceased former volunteer*



Sister Rose Dolores Hoffelmeyer, Bethany Ministry volunteer, and Brett Peterson, LCF public information officer.

Now, Doug is a mainstay in the group and proudly displays the colorful tooled-leather portrait of the late Mary Jo Steger, a Bethany Ministry volunteer who was a great favorite of the inmates and was considered their personal “saint.” Crafted by another friend of Doug’s, the portrait sits on the altar table in the room when the group meets.

As head Catholic rep among inmates in the medium facility at LCF, Joshua Olga is diligent about arranging the space for the call-out. He appreciates the fellowship and

friendship, and wants to make sure everything is in good order – the statue of Mary and candles on the altar; the paper Stations of the Cross; the hymnals and missalettes.

“It’s like family in here on Wednesday nights,” Joshua said. “This gives me peace.”

“It’s my peace,” echoed I.G. Wimbish IV, a prisoner of 19 years, recalling that as a child he ran from church and was afraid of it. “The way I was living didn’t fit with church,” he explained. “The streets were more important to me. I enjoy a calm with this group. I never had this calm.”

Mutual blessing

It’s likely that the volunteers would all agree that they receive more than they give by participating in Bethany Ministry.

“No group is as welcoming as that group,” said Sister Arthel Cline, referring to the inmates. Sister Arthel is one of the Bethany Ministry originals along with Chris O’Brien, her friend, and George, who initiated the opportunity based on a similar volunteer experience he had in the disciplinary barracks at Fort Leavenworth.

“It is a time of sharing Good News,” summed up Sister Nancy Bauman who has volunteered in the ministry for nine years. “The prisoners truly evangelize me with their openness.”



A recent Wednesday evening Catholic call-out at Lansing Correctional Facility began with music and hymns. Left to right, Doug Heronemus, Chris O’Brien, Michaela Forge and Sister Gloria Solomon.



Following each Wednesday evening gathering, Bethany Ministry continues for the volunteers who meet at the Mother House for an informal meeting and a simple meal prepared by their members. Left to right, George Steger, SCLA, and Sisters Arthel Cline and Marie Brinkman.

‘We’ the theme of intentional community

More than a house, Xavier Community lives up to its name as a community. It’s the chance for young women to experience intentional community for a few days or a few years. It presents the opportunity to live simply and to extend hospitality. It’s an inviting place to discern the call to religious life. And it’s a sharing space for spiritual growth and awareness of social issues.

Currently home to four SCLs and four laywomen, Xavier Community, Kansas City, Kan., is accepting and encouraging as described by Kate Becker. “We each come as we are, and we try to be authentic,” she continued. “We welcome the support that other members offer us in our jobs and ministries.” Kate is a program manager with Bridging the Gap, an organization that connects the environment, education, the economy and community.

“We” is the operative word at Xavier Community. Sister Helen Bristow explained that everyone shares in all activities. “Each of us leads prayer, cooks, cleans or shops,” she said.

“There are lots of ‘we’ projects,” added Denise Morris, elementary school teacher.

Expanding the circle

The “we” expands to draw other people into the circle of community. For example, Sister Vicki Lichtenauer, SCL vocation director, said that members of the Xavier Community committed to do a blessing at all of their workplaces or ministries. When Denise asked another teacher at her school if she wanted her room blessed, the woman agreed.

Xavier Community hosts monthly People of Hope dinners. Men and women in the area who are involved in service in the spirit of St. Vincent de Paul come to the house to share a simple meal followed by prayer and reflection. Other dinner guests have included their pastor and persons who are homeless. Plus, Xavier Community provides temporary housing for students visiting the metropolitan area and doing volunteer projects.

Sister Vicki is quick to say that Xavier Community isn’t a hotel. Its purpose is to draw young people into many dimensions of the Vincentian and SCL spirit through a supportive community that is God-centered and faith-based.

Modeling community

Laurie Parker, a music teacher and graduate student in the music therapy program at the University of Kansas, appreciates the Sisters as mentors and role models. “They show us what community life is,” she said, “and it’s also nice to live with other people my age to talk and share ideas.”

Denise acknowledged Xavier Community as “a way to discern a vocation without making the final commitment while discerning.” She said she had lived on her own for several years and didn’t know how she would fare in community. “Xavier Community has pulled me out of myself and called me to be more than just me by stretching myself,” she added.

“It’s a very active place,” Sister Mary Geraldine Yelich observed.

“If you have a concern about being bored, come here to experience otherwise,” chimed in Sister Mary Rachel Flynn.

“I always feel at home here,” offered Yessenia Silva, a student who recently graduated from Donnelly College with her associate of arts degree.

Three of the laywomen are discerning religious life, but this is not a requisite for being part of Xavier Community. “What is required,” Sister Vicki said, “is an interest in deepening individual spiritual life through common prayer and faith sharing, the desire to live simply and willingness to be in community.”

For more information about the Xavier Community, contact Sisters Helen, Mary Geraldine, Mary Rachel or Vicki at 913-342-4682 or email vickil@scls.org.

- 1 Gathered around the dinner table at Xavier Community, clockwise from left, Yessenia Silva, Laurie Parker, Denise Morris, Sisters Mary Rachel Flynn and Helen Bristow, Kate Becker, Sisters Mary Geraldine Yelich and Vicki Lichtenauer.
- 2 Part of being community is the commitment to pray together. During prayer at Xavier Community, clockwise from left, Sisters Mary Rachel Flynn and Mary Geraldine Yelich, Yessenia Silva, Sister Helen Bristow, Denise Morris, Laurie Parker, Sister Vicki Lichtenauer and Kate Becker.
- 3 Community also means shared chores. At the sink from left, Sister Helen Bristow, Yessenia Silva and Denise Morris with Sister Mary Rachel Flynn in the background.
- 4 Kate Becker (left) prepares the ground for the plant held by Sister Vicki Lichtenauer. Care of the earth ranks high among Xavier Community's priorities.

XAVIER COMMUNITY – ITS HISTORY

- Xavier Community began in Kansas City, Kan., in 1999.
- Its goal has remained to invite women who want to experience “intentional” community.
- It is not an alternative to apartment living, nor is pursuing a religious vocation a requirement of living there.
- Persons seeking this opportunity will complete an interview, and must have health insurance and be able to share in living expenses and household responsibilities.
- Since Xavier Community opened, 23 women (other than SCLs) have experienced the opportunity.



Beyond All Borders

Moments of grace – personal, cosmological, historical and communal – will be the focus of two separate spiritual opportunities hosted by Marillac Center, Leavenworth, Kan., this summer.

Day of prayer, retreat to celebrate moments of grace in life, creation



Sister Gail
Worcelo, sgm



Sister Rejane
Cytacki, SCL

SCL Care of Creation Committee introduces new website

Keep current with the work of the SCL Care of
Creation Committee and check out resources
offered by visiting

[https://sites.google.com/site/
sclearthsite/home](https://sites.google.com/site/sclearthsite/home).

On **Saturday, July 28**, Sister Gail Worcelo, sgm, and Sister Rejane Cytacki, SCL, will facilitate a **day of prayer** from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., O'Shea Conference Center, SCL Mother House. Sponsored by the SCL Care of Creation Committee, the day of prayer will center on how to be open to the moments of grace that deepen our Christ consciousness within creation. The day will include input, ritual, reflection and sharing. Cost for the day of prayer is \$15 per person and includes lunch. Scholarships are available.

Sister Gail is a retreat leader, teacher and lecturer with degrees in clinical psychology and Christian spirituality. She is co-founder with the late Rev. Thomas Berry of Green Mountain Monastery, Greensboro, Vt., a new contemplative community dedicated to the evolution of Christ consciousness and carrying the beauty of the Catholic tradition forward to its full flowering.

Sister Rejane brings a passion and commitment to care of the earth as a teacher with degrees in cultural anthropology, education and ecospirituality (2012).

• • •

From **Sunday, July 29, through Sunday, Aug. 5**, Sister Gail will give a **retreat titled "Evolutionary Christianity: A New Moment of Grace."** Over the six days, Sister Gail will explore moments of grace as privileged times of special creativity that shape the future in enduring and irreversible ways. She will point to a new moment of grace in the Christian tradition and the call of the living Christ to enter into his spirit of unitive consciousness in this cosmological/planetary era.

To inquire about fees or scholarships, or to register for the day of prayer, the retreat or both, contact Marillac Center, schase@scls.org or 913-680-2342; or visit www.marillaccenter.org.

Missionary to South Sudan values global community

When Sister Patricia Johannsen entered the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth (SCLs) in 1966, the first SCLs were returning from new missions in South America, giving talks and asking the question: “Who wants to be a missionary?” Sister Pat remembers that she never raised her hand to indicate an affirmative answer.

However, today, after one year of volunteering to do teacher education in the new country of South Sudan in Africa, she’s begun to think of herself as a missionary. Sister Pat says she has come to realize, “We are indeed a global community. We have a responsibility to people who have not had the good fortune we have had in the United States. We are brothers and sisters around the world.”

‘Awesome experience’

In the Midwest for a one-month vacation before returning to Africa for two more years, Sister Pat described her time in the new nation as “an awesome experience” and one through which she has “learned so much.” She was in South Sudan when the country gained and celebrated its independence last year. She’s hopeful that South Sudan will continue to grow and develop, and that women will be empowered to have a role in society.

Sister Pat and other missionaries volunteering with Solidarity for South Sudan are doing their part to help ensure that education remains a strong source of hope. Solidarity for South Sudan is an initiative of religious institutes of men and women that are members of the Unions of Superiors General, and the Church in South Sudan.

Sister Pat’s primary focus is teacher education that includes three different types of coursework and instruction. Sister Pat offers intensive English and mathematics foundation programs for teachers who may not be strong in English – one of two official languages (the other, Arabic). In addition, she provides in-services for teachers who

volunteered to teach during the recent war but had little education themselves. And finally, she gives pre-service programs to secondary school graduates who want to teach, including five women who enrolled in a recent session. Sister Pat said that South Sudan’s universities are currently not strong and that the nation is a long way from having university-taught instructors. Even for her programs, the instructors don’t have textbooks. They spend much of their time in course preparation and teach many classes under trees and in the open air.

“The need for teachers is critical at this time,” she added, explaining that there is a state school system and a Catholic school system with blending between the two. For example, Christian religious education is part of the state system curriculum. “Church and state are not separated as we know them in the United States,” Sister Pat said.

The hope is to help raise people out of poverty through education. It’s a challenge, however, because in remote villages, people cannot afford expenses

associated with school. They live at a subsistence level – making bricks; selling tall grass for thatch huts; making and selling charcoal. Even though education is free (although not mandatory for youth), there are expenses including books and uniforms.

Meeting challenges with hope

Sister Pat lives in Western Equatoria, one of 10 states in South Sudan, and spends much of her time in Yambio County. The instructors travel to remote areas by small planes operated by the World Food Program or by automobile. However, poor roads and an abundance of dust in the hot climate present travel challenges.

The people lack clean water, and they live with disease including malaria and typhoid. Then there are the language and cultural differences that the missionaries encounter daily – like polygamy among the tribes and means of communication (drums and advertisements placed on trees).

In spite of all of these challenges or perhaps because of them, Sister Pat said that her initial prayer “that God let something essential happen to me, let something happen which is my real self” is being answered daily through her ministry in South Sudan. “I learn as much as I give,” she summarized. “Our role is teacher education, but by interacting with the people, we are nation-building, and modeling Christian values and offering hope in whatever we do.”



Sister Pat Johannsen (left) with Sister Eileen Haynes, SCL community councilor.

Journeying with immigrants

In her fifth year as coordinator of immigration services for Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Gallup, N.M., Sister Janet Cashman's full-time ministry is to offer legal services to immigrants.

This encompasses helping persons complete paperwork and apply for citizenship, accompanying them to interviews and offering support. To qualify to provide these services, Sister Janet received training through Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC), an organization begun by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and affiliated with the Church. With this training, she became a partially accredited representative, granted through the Board of Immigration Appeals. (Fully accredited status requires additional experience.)

In the absence of an immigration lawyer in the diocese, Sister Janet is the legal resource. She has access to a 24-hour hotline to consult with an attorney, if needed. She works out of three offices – one in Gallup;



Sister Janet Cashman



a second in Farmington, N.M.; and the third in Holbrook, Ariz.

Sister Janet believes that lack of laws to allow people who are undocumented to become legal is a major deterrent facing immigrants she serves. Other barriers include expenses associated with filing fees and the requirement that someone must agree and sign to support the immigrant financially for 10 years if the person needs assistance. Because of these many complicating factors, Sister Janet is actively involved with advocacy to promote the cause of immigration.

She measures success by how many persons are granted legal permanent residency, U.S. citizenship or renewal of the green card. In 2011, five clients were granted legal permanent residency, 13 were granted U.S. citizenship, and 22 received renewal of their "green cards" (legal permanent residency).

"My ministry allows me to help people who live at the margins and to work for their equality and justice," Sister Janet said. "This is responding to the call of the Church and our SCL Chapter Acts, and I'm grateful for the opportunity to do this special work."

Charity Federation raises voice for human rights

The nine United States congregations of the Sisters of Charity Federation (including the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth) signed on as an interested party to a brief prepared by the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights and other organizations to address the U.S. Supreme Court hearing on Arizona Senate Bill 1070 (S.B. 1070).

A diverse coalition of 200 national organizations that promote and protect the rights of all persons in the United States signed the brief expressing that their constituents will suffer harmful effects of S.B. 1070 and copycat legislation in other states. The brief stated that the law negatively impacts people living in poverty and immigrants.

Going beyond requirements of U.S. federal law, the Arizona legislation makes it a state misdemeanor crime for a person to be in Arizona without carrying required documents. It further requires state law enforcement officers to attempt to determine an individual's immigration status during a "lawful stop, detention or arrest" when reasonable suspicion exists about immigration status. The Supreme Court will rule on this legislation later this summer.

Besides signing the brief, individual congregations submitted statements to express their concerns and their commitment to the rights of immigrants.



Sister Elena Mack observed the computer work of one of the students in the library in Chuschi, Peru.

Grant benefits students in Chuschi, Peru

A \$6,300 grant from the Catholic Human Services Foundation, Pittstown, N.J., has greatly enhanced library and study space for elementary and secondary students in Chuschi, Peru.

With the funds, the Hermanas purchased a copy machine, five computers and three laser printers. Hermanas Susana Córdova Castillo and Deidy Abad Pulache coordinated purchases and reorganized space to make it functional.

With Internet connections arriving in Chuschi in April 2012 and the new academic year beginning concurrently, the timing was excellent for adding computers. Students can do research, prepare reports, make presentations and complete their homework. The Hermanas and others can use the computers for meeting minutes, record-keeping and other needs.

The library is located in a large multi-purpose room that the Hermanas had foresight to build as part of the construction of the Chuschi convent. Prior to the grant, there was only one copy machine in the entire village. Now, students and other groups have convenient access to the copy machine.

On average, 15 to 20 students come to the library after school for homework and study. A place, space, resources, materials, computers and regular supervision were needed to help augment students' work at school.

Ministry to Spanish-speaking includes leadership development

Having come to the United States from Peru eight years ago, Sister Maria Orozco understands firsthand some of what new immigrants face and experience. She recalls how challenging her first years in this country were, living with American Sisters and working with Spanish-speaking persons from Mexico. "There's a cultural difference between Peru and Mexico," she said.



Sister Maria Orozco

Sister Maria learned speech idioms and about the Mexican culture from a book shared by Father Patrick Murphy, cs, animator of Hispanic Ministry, Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas. Through her ministry, she became immersed with faith and leadership formation of people from Mexico. So much so, that when she returned to Peru for a visit three years ago, people in her homeland mistook her accent as being from Mexico!

Sister Maria is catechist for adults in three parishes in Kansas: Our Lady of Unity and Blessed Sacrament, Kansas City, Kan.; and Holy Cross, Overland Park, Kan. She also does ministry leadership development for the Archdiocesan Office of Hispanic Ministry. Instead of "Sister," many parishioners call her "Madre" – more respectful in the Mexican culture.

She loves working with people and learning more about them. "Sometimes, the families are broken," Sister Maria said, "and my goal is to raise them up, especially by helping the women learn to respect themselves."

Because people know and trust her, families frequently contact Sister Maria to visit jails when someone has been imprisoned. Many times, this is because the person lacks his/her documents and is experiencing legal problems. "Without a driver's license and without papers, they don't know what to do," she said. "I often look with them for a lawyer."

She also writes reference letters for people who are completing their paperwork for legal residency. Her work specific to immigration is voluntary but highly interconnected with her ministry to adults and her commitment as an SCL to justice and human dignity.

Overextended and loving it



Jan Cassel, SCLA (left), brought Terri Butel, SCLA, director of Associates, up to date on happenings in Billings, Mont., during a recent meeting of the SCL Associate Advisory Board.

If she had her druthers, Jan Cassel might consider relocating to Leavenworth, Kan. Doing this would place her and her husband geographically between both sets of their parents. And it would situate Jan in close proximity to the SCL Mother House, the Sisters and the campus she loves to visit.

However, a first grandchild on the way, commitment to her employer and dedication to the Associates, her parish and other ties are keeping Jan in Billings, Mont., where she has lived since 1984. Jan is house supervisor at St. Vincent Healthcare and serves on the hospital's Mission Council. She is one very active SCLA

and point person for bringing the Billings' Associates together and engaging them in various activities. Jan also serves as a member of the SCL Associate Advisory Board.

And that's not all! Jan is a parish nurse, an extraordinary minister of the Eucharist and an avid bicyclist, and she also does Tai Chi. "I'm overextended," Jan admits with laughter.

But she loves it and wouldn't have it otherwise.

Sister Jean Casey was Jan's SCLA sponsor five years ago when she became an Associate. When Sister Mary Lou Mendel, who was in Billings at the time, discussed the need for sandwiches for school

kids and the homeless, Jan and Mark, her husband and Associate in spirit, responded. They began coordinating a group that continues to gather monthly at St. Vincent Healthcare to assemble 400 peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. Mark transports the sandwiches to Montana Rescue Mission for distribution.

Associates, SCLs, Tai Chi friends and hospital employees have joined the assembly line. Jan said people are eager to help and experience the Vincentian spirit. She has another opportunity to communicate Vincentian values in her role as a team member for service culture training at the hospital. "They only give me two hours to teach," Jan remarked. "I could teach all day!"

Jan appreciates working in a faith-based environment. "When you walk in the door, you feel the love, compassion and dedication," she observed.

She also deeply appreciates the SCLs. She had the opportunity to travel to Peru in 2006 with her parish that has a sister parish in Piura where SCLs minister. "We got to know the parishioners and their needs," she said. "They've helped us more over the years than we've helped them."

Jan credits her growth as a Christian to being an Associate. "The Vincentian way is a calling in life," she commented. "The Sisters are such a support, inspiration and role models. Without them, my life wouldn't be as wonderful or enriched."

Companions in Discipleship

Celebrating 25 years of kinship with SCLs

by Terri Butel, SCLA
Director of Associates

The 25th anniversary of the Associates of the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth will be observed starting this year with the theme "Companions in Discipleship."

We are celebrating kinship with the Sisters of Charity, who nurtured so many of us in our young lives spiritually and scholastically, and now further our spiritual formation with particular emphasis on Gospel- and Vincentian-inspired service to the poor in charity, humility and simplicity. Our intention is that this service, witness and advocacy for social justice concerns will systemically change our communities and create a future where all are served and loved unconditionally.

We have chosen as the symbol for our celebration a white milk pitcher with which SCL novices served the Community at daily meals over 70 years ago. The pitcher symbolizes the life-giving nourishment we receive from the Sisters of Charity, which energizes us to serve in the same spirit of St. Vincent de Paul, St. Louise de Marillac and Mother Xavier Ross.

The official opening of the 25th anniversary celebration will occur during the Associate retreat, **Sept. 7-9, 2012**, in Marillac Center, Leavenworth, Kan. The retreat is entitled: "Discipleship: An Invitation and a Challenge." All Associates are encouraged to attend. If that is not possible, all are welcome to the Mass in Ross Chapel on **Sunday, Sept. 9 at 10 a.m.**

We will launch the 25th anniversary celebrations locally as part of the Fall 2012 Regional Gatherings on the following dates:

- **Montana:** Sept. 22
- **Kansas/Missouri:** Oct. 13, 14 and 20
- **Colorado:** Oct. 27

We will close the 25th anniversary observance at the all-Community gathering in Leavenworth, **July 4-7, 2013**. All Associates are encouraged to attend this gathering.

Gratitude and remembrance will permeate these rituals! More information will be forthcoming from the Associate Office.



This historic milk pitcher will serve as the symbol of the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the SCL Associates.

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Sister Owen Marie Falk (left) enjoyed a cup of coffee and a visit with Sister Rosella Mary Hehn.

From young kids to older adults, a ministry of creativity

Truth be told, it was the religious garb (habit) that first caused Sister Owen Marie Falk to prefer the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth over another religious community she had considered joining. But it didn't take long after meeting the SCLs that she recalls, "I was very attracted to this Community."

Sister Owen Marie entered the SCLs right out of high school in 1939 – 73 years ago. She wanted to teach and was at home in a first-grade classroom for many years in several states. "I loved primary grades," Sister Owen Marie said. "I enjoyed that age of children very much."

Following her Mother's death, Sister kept her eyes and ears open for mission opportunities in Denver so that she could be near her Father and her beloved younger sister, Sister Marie de Lourdes Falk, who had joined the Community in 1947. In 40 years of teaching, Sister Owen Marie had never gotten to teach with her sister. In 1971, the two – separated by seven years in age – finally were

together in the Denver area, albeit teaching in different schools – Sister Marie de Lourdes at St. Bernadette's and Sister Owen Marie at Annunciation.

Their next mission assignments brought the two together. Sister Mary Lucy Downey had been instrumental in the start-up of Archdiocesan Housing in Denver. Sister Owen Marie remembers her fondly as a "highly respected leader who did great things in housing."

One of the things Sister Mary Lucy did was engage other SCLs in this ministry, including the two Falk SCLs.

Sister Marie de Lourdes became the management coordinator of Holy Family Plaza; Sister Owen Marie, the hospitality coordinator/receptionist. Sister Owen Marie brought the enthusiasm and creativity she had shared with children in the classroom to her new ministry with older adults. She invited residents to share their stories on camera as she interviewed them. She arranged intergenerational opportunities with residents and students, and she planned outings

for the seniors. After 20 years in this ministry, Sister Owen Marie began volunteering in the oncology department of Saint Joseph Hospital, Denver.

As Sister Marie de Lourdes' health began to fail, the two Sisters returned to the Mother House in November 2010. Not long after, the younger sister died. "This broke my heart," Sister Owen Marie said. "She had a darling personality. Everybody who knew her loved her."

As Sister Owen Marie recuperates from a broken leg at Ross Hall in Leavenworth, she's under the watchful eyes of a favorite portrait of Sister Marie de Lourdes. She also remains in close contact with her two sisters in Denver, Pat Falk, an Associate, and Anne Brennan.

Sister Owen Marie enjoys the company of SCLs with whom she has served through the years. "The Mother House is a wonderful place to be," she said. "I'd have to say that I've loved everything that I've done and been very happy as a Sister of Charity."

Contributions of women religious inspiring

Women & Spirit DVD, Leadership Conference of Women Religious, 2011

Many of our SCLs and SCLAs have had the opportunity to view the “Women & Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America” exhibit firsthand in the various locations where it has been on display. For those who have not, I would wholeheartedly encourage you to watch the DVD available through the Community. Besides the main feature, the DVD offers thematic contributions, historical insights and testimonials from Sisters today.

Seeing the many specific contributions and sacrifices of women religious was both insightful and inspiring. Sisters serving in this country were influenced by and helped shape the history and future in which we find ourselves today. The reviewer is reminded that these committed women learned to teach, nurse and parent orphans, as well as to respond to needs of the times as they encountered challenges. This gave new meaning to “on the job training.”

Ministry takes multiple forms

Our foremothers were pragmatic as well as innovative. They served those in need at the moment while also being forward-thinking, inventive and creative. In order to serve others, they acquired resources by begging, and some even sold insurance tickets to loggers, so they would be covered for medical needs, if they were hurt while working.

Ministry found them charging into battlefields to nurse wounded soldiers, regardless of the color of uniform, as well as serving those stricken with cholera, flu and other epidemic outbreaks. In 1861, a gun boat raised a truce flag as it steamed up the river carrying the first Catholic Sister, a Sister of Charity of Nazareth, to die on duty nursing the wounded during the Civil War. Throughout those early years, Sisters gave up their own beds for patients and their meager food for children in their care. They forged ahead in creating a national, integrated

health care system, and established and staffed schools built with the pennies of immigrants.

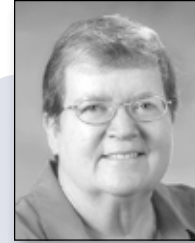
Through their colleges, Catholic Sisters provided opportunities for women to be better educated and established graduate programs for continuing education. This is especially remarkable as much of this growth came about during a time of strong anti-Catholic sentiment and fear. Some Sisters invented equipment to care for premature babies; one collaborated with Dr. Mayo and his sons to establish a facility that would evolve into Mayo Clinic.

Another Sister worked with the co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous to develop treatment programs for those suffering from alcoholism.

While Sisters were serving the physical needs of their people, they also tended to their aesthetic needs, bringing the sounds of music and praise with their voices and musical instruments as they responded to emerging needs. When the SCLs arrived in “Bloody Kansas,” they, too, brought a harp and love of music to this territory and its pioneers.

Catholic Sisters focused on higher education for teaching, nursing, pastoral work and social services to better prepare their members for meeting needs in a changing world. Undergirding their personal service and ministry was their spirit of prayer and faithfulness to Jesus Christ and the mission of the Church expressed in the Gospel.

Through a process of personal and communal renewal, American sisters responded to directives of change from Church leaders in Vatican II in the mid-1960s by revitalizing their community charisms. They doggedly raised concerns about issues of social justice, and they continue to bridge the call to be contemplative apostolic witnesses to the “Good News” in our modern world.



by Sister Mary
Pat Lenahan

A legacy of witnessing

We are those women and their spiritual daughters. Their story reminds and urges us in our call to be the best we can be as we witness faithfully and lovingly to Jesus by serving our brothers and sisters through the mission of the Church. Just as our pioneer Sisters offered consolation and courage to those whom they served, we, too, are called to nothing less.

This courage, zeal, creativity and innovation continue today. We owe a debt of gratitude and recognition to those Sisters who serve us in leadership. Through efforts of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR), members of communities had the wisdom, vision, passion and commitment of resources to bring to life our rich history and legacy in sponsoring the Women & Spirit exhibit as well as producing the DVD. In remembering the sacrifices and faith of the past, we have the courage and strength to transform the present into the vision and reality of the future.

During our own challenging times, we are called in today’s frontiers to be the “cutting edge of the Church” through direct service and fearless advocacy. As we are “impelled by the love of Christ,” we continue to commit ourselves and our resources to serve those living in poverty and in need of our loving presence and care. Those who have gone before us – and those who will follow in our own SCL footsteps – would expect nothing less!

(Sisters and Associates can borrow a copy of the DVD by contacting Joyce Macdonald, Cantwell Hall, 913-758-6539 or jmacdonald@scls.org.)

USM launches physical therapy degree



Mark Horacek, PT, MS, PhD, director,
USM DPT program

The doctor of physical therapy (DPT) program at the University of Saint Mary (USM), Leavenworth, Kan., welcomed its first class of students on June 4.

In May, the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE) of the American Physical Therapy Association, the accrediting body for physical therapy education programs, granted candidacy status for the USM DPT program. USM also received approval from the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) to offer the doctoral program.

“This is a big moment for our program and the university,” said Mark Horacek, PT, MS, PhD, director of USM’s DPT program. “You cannot begin your program without candidacy, and our faculty and staff have been working very hard in this effort.

USM President Sister Diane Steele hailed CAPTE’s decision as the latest development at a historic time in USM history.

“The doctor of physical therapy is the cornerstone in our strategic plan to help answer the nation’s growing need for highly trained health care professionals,” Sister Diane said. “The DPT complements our many other health care education offerings, including our well-regarded nursing program, the new accelerated bachelor of science in nursing track, and our new health information management program.”

Over the next three years, as the university’s first cohort of physical therapy students completes their education, USM will undertake a self-study culminating in an accreditation visit in 2015. The visit will coincide with the last semester of the first cohort’s final year at USM. If the university meets CAPTE’s expectations, the program will be granted accreditation prior to the graduation of the first DPT class.

For more information, visit www.st.mary.edu.

Blessings! ¡Bendiciones!

Labyrinth at Rio Rico

The mid-April conference titled,
“God’s Welcoming Table and
Comprehensive Immigration Reform,”

and the surroundings inspired
Carolyn Zimmerman, SCLA, to write
this poem/reflection on the labyrinth
in Rio Rico, Ariz., site of the meeting.

Celebration, the monthly worship resource
and sister publication of *National Catholic
Reporter*, hosted the conference on effective
liturgy April 11-13. Also attending were
Sisters Therese Bangert, Cele Breen,
Peg Johnson and Frances Russell.



The walker begins at the edge of a white canvas square,
room-size, stretched on a flat patio.
Slender vigil lights lend color and fat plastic jugs of sun-warmed water
fasten canvas firmly to a concrete floor under a morning sky.

The labyrinth pathway is painted dried-blood brown
against the canvas and spirals round
and round to encircle its heart,
the Virgin of Guadalupe.

She is, as often, made of tin,
painted rose, green, blue,
crowned with the sharp points of a golden star,
and sitting a little crooked atop a sad tableau.

Nestled at the Virgin’s feet are worn blankets,
a bed roll, a backpack,
quiet witnesses to journeys started in hope,
finished only God knows where.

The labyrinth walker moves slowly between those brown-blood lines,
stopping now and then to reach down
and gently touch the shoes.

Found shoes from the desert line the labyrinth path.
Real shoes well-worn, sandals, boots, high heels, flats,
Leather, canvas, plastic,
gray, brown, black,
even the vibrant colors dusted with sand.

Pairs tied together, soles tied on,
a cowboy boot with its toe bent up,
a baby’s sturdy lace-up.

Who are the owners? Who wore these shoes?
Where are they now?

There is pain in not knowing.
They longed to cross the border to a new life.

Did they?
Or was the crossing
death?

Created by Deborah McCullough
of Tucson, Ariz., this labyrinth invites
walkers to follow a path of meditation
and to pause in solidarity with
migrants who travel the Sonoran
Desert north of Nogales. The labyrinth
is typical of her provocative social
justice art relating to the
United States-Mexican border.

*Photo by Leo Guardado,
Most Holy Trinity Parish, Tucson.*

Carolyn Saenz Zimmerman, April 2012



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